ESSAYS
AND
TREATISES
ON
SEVERAL SUBJECTS.

By DAVID HUME, Esq;

VOL. IV.

CONTAINING

An ENQUIRY concerning the PRINCIPLES of MORALS;

AND

The NATURAL HISTORY of RELIGION.

A NEW EDITION.

LONDON:
Printed for T. CADELL (Succeſſor to Mr. MILLAR)
in the Strand; and
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THE

CONTENTS

OF THE

FOURTH VOLUME.

An ENQUIRY concerning the PRINCIPLES of MORALS.

Section		Page
I.	OF the general Principles of Morals	3
II.	Of Benevolence	12
III.	Of Juſtice	32
IV.	Of political Society	60
V.	Why Utility pleaſes	69
VI.	Of Qualities uſeful to Ourſelves	96
VII.	Of Qualities immediately agreeable to Ourſelves	119
VIII.	Of Qualities immediately agreeable to Others	135
IX.	Concluſion.	145

APPENDIX.

I.	Concerning moral Sentiment	168
II.	Some further Conſiderations with regard to Juſtice	183
III.	Of ſome verbal Diſputes	192
	A DIALOGUE	207

The

The NATURAL HISTORY of RELIGION.

Section		Page
	INTRODUCTION	237
I.	THAT Polytheism was the primary Religion of men	239
II.	Origin of Polytheism	245
III.	The same Subject continued	249
IV.	Deities not considered as Creators or Formers of the World	255
V.	Various forms of Polytheism, Allegory, Hero-Worship	265
VI.	Origin of Theism from Polytheism	271
VII.	Confirmation of this Doctrine	278
VIII.	Flux and Reflux of Polytheism and Theism	281
IX.	Comparison of these Religions with regard to Persecution and Toleration	284
X.	With regard to Courage or Abasement	289
XI.	With regard to Reason or Absurdity	292
XII.	With regard to Doubt or Conviction	295
XIII.	Impious Conceptions of the divine Nature in most popular Religions of both Kinds	312
XIV.	Bad Influence of most popular Religions on Morality	317
XV.	General Corollary	325

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AN

ENQUIRY

CONCERNING THE

PRINCIPLES

OF

MORALS.

VOL. IV. B

BRITISH MUSEUM

SECTION I.

Of the General Principles of Morals.

DISPUTES with perſons, pertinaciouſly obſtinate in their principles, are, of all others, the moſt irkſome; except, perhaps, thoſe with perſons, entirely diſingenuous, who really do not believe the opinion they defend, but engage in the controverſy, from affectation, from a ſpirit of oppoſition, or from a deſire of ſhowing wit and ingenuity, ſuperior to the reſt of mankind. The ſame blind adherence to their own arguments is to be expected in both; the ſame contempt of their antagoniſts; and the ſame paſſionate vehemence, in inforcing ſophiſtry and falſehood. And as reaſoning is not the ſource, whence either diſputant derives his tenets; it is in vain to expect, that any logic, which ſpeaks not to the affections, will ever engage him to embrace ſounder principles.

Thoſe who have denied the reality of moral diſtinctions, may be ranked among the diſingenuous diſputants; nor is it conceivable, that any human

creature could ever ſeriouſly believe, that all characters and actions were alike intitled to the affection and regard of every one. The difference, which nature has placed between one man and another, is ſo wide, and this difference is ſtill ſo much farther widened, by education, example, and habit, that, where the oppoſite extremes come at once under our apprehenſion, there is no ſcepticiſm ſo ſcrupulous, and ſcarce any aſſurance ſo determined, as abſolutely to deny all diſtinction between them. Let a man's inſenſibility be ever ſo great, he muſt often be touched with the images of RIGHT and WRONG; and let his prejudices be ever ſo obſtinate, he muſt obſerve, that others are ſuſceptible of like impreſſions. The only way, therefore, of converting an antagoniſt of this kind, is to leave him to himſelf. For, finding that no body keeps up the controverſy with him, it is probable he will, at laſt, of himſelf, from mere wearineſs, come over to the ſide of common ſenſe and reaſon.

There has been a controverſy ſtarted of late, much better worth examination, concerning the general foundation of MORALS; whether they are derived from REASON, or from SENTIMENT; whether we attain the knowledge of them by a chain of argument and induction, or by an immediate feeling and finer internal ſenſe; whether, like

all ſound judgment of truth and falſehood, they ſhould be the ſame to every rational intelligent being; or whether, like the perception of beauty and deformity, they are founded entirely on the particular fabric and conſtitution of the human ſpecies.

The ancient philoſophers, though they often affirm, that virtue is nothing but conformity to reaſon, yet, in general, ſeem to conſider morals as deriving their exiſtence from taſte and ſentiment. On the other hand, our modern enquirers, though they alſo talk much of the beauty of virtue, and deformity of vice, yet have commonly endeavoured to account for theſe diſtinctions by metaphyſical reaſonings, and by deductions from the moſt abſtract principles of human underſtanding. Such confuſion reigned in theſe ſubjects, that an oppoſition of the greateſt conſequence could prevail between one ſyſtem and another, and even in the parts almoſt of each individual ſyſtem; and yet no body, till very lately, was ever ſenſible of it. The elegant Lord Shaftesbury, who firſt gave occaſion to remark this diſtinction, and who, in general, adhered to the principles of the ancients, is not, himſelf, entirely free from the ſame confuſion.

It muſt be acknowledged, that both ſides of the queſtion are ſuſceptible of ſpecious arguments. Moral diſtinctions, it may be ſaid, are diſcernible

by pure *reaſon:* Elſe, whence the many diſputes that reign in common life, as well as in philoſophy, with regard to this ſubject: The long chain of proofs often produced on both ſides; the examples cited, the authorities appealed to, the analogies employed, the fallacies detected, the inferences drawn, and the ſeveral concluſions adjuſted to their proper principles. Truth is diſputable; not taſte: What exiſts in the nature of things is the ſtandard of our judgment; what each man feels within himſelf is the ſtandard of ſentiment. Propoſitions in geometry may be proved, ſyſtems in phyſics may be controverted; but the harmony of verſe, the tenderneſs of paſſion, the brilliancy of wit, muſt give immediate pleaſure. No man reaſons concerning another's beauty; but frequently concerning the juſtice or injuſtice of his actions. In every criminal trial the firſt object of the priſoner is to diſprove the facts alleged, and deny the actions imputed to him: The ſecond to prove, that, even if theſe actions were real, they might be juſtified, as innocent and lawful. It is confeſſedly by deductions of the underſtanding, that the firſt point is aſcertained: How can we ſuppoſe that a different faculty of the mind is employed in fixing the other?

On the other hand, thoſe who would reſolve all moral determinations into *ſentiment*, may endeavour to ſhow, that it is impoſſible for reaſon ever to draw

concluſions

concluſions of this nature. To virtue, ſay they, it belongs to be *amiable*, and vice *odious*. This forms their very nature or eſſence. But can reaſon or argumentation diſtribute theſe different epithets to any ſubjects, and pronounce before-hand, that this muſt produce love, and that hatred? Or what other reaſon can we ever aſſign for theſe affections, but the original fabric and formation of the human mind, which is naturally adapted to receive them?

The end of all moral ſpeculations is to teach us our duty: and, by proper repreſentations of the deformity of vice and beauty of virtue, beget correſpondent habits, and engage us to avoid the one, and embrace the other. But is this ever to be expected from inferences and concluſions of the underſtanding, which of themſelves have no hold of the affections, nor ſet in motion the active powers of men? They diſcover truths: But where the truths which they diſcover are indifferent, and beget no deſire or averſion, they can have no influence on conduct and behaviour. What is honourable, what is fair, what is becoming, what is noble, what is generous, takes poſſeſſion of the heart, and animates us to embrace and maintain it. What is intelligible, what is evident, what is probable, what is true, procures only the cool aſſent of the underſtanding; and gratifying a ſpeculative curioſity, puts an end to our reſearches.

Extinguiſh all the warm feelings and prepoſſeſſions in favour of virtue, and all diſguſt or averſion againſt vice: Render men totally indifferent towards theſe diſtinctions; and morality is no longer a practical ſtudy, nor has any tendency to regulate our lives and actions.

Theſe arguments on each ſide (and many more might be produced) are ſo plauſible, that I am apt to ſuſpect, they may, the one as well as the other, be ſolid and ſatisfactory, and that *reaſon* and *ſentiment* concur in almoſt all moral determinations and concluſions. The final ſentence, it is probable, which pronounces characters and actions amiable or odious, praiſe-worthy or blameable; that which ſtamps on them the mark of honour or infamy, approbation or cenſure; that which renders morality an active principle, and conſtitutes virtue our happineſs, and vice our miſery: It is probable, I ſay, that this final ſentence depends on ſome internal ſenſe or feeling, which nature has made univerſal in the whole ſpecies. For what elſe can have an influence of this nature? But in order to pave the way for ſuch a ſentiment, and give a proper diſcernment of its object, it is often neceſſary, we find, that much reaſoning ſhould precede, that nice diſtinctions be made, juſt concluſions drawn, diſtant compariſons formed, complicated relations examined, and general facts fixed and aſcertained.

Some

Some ſpecies of beauty, eſpecially the natural kinds, on their firſt appearance, command our affection and approbation; and where they fail of this effect, it is impoſſible for any reaſoning to redreſs their influence, or adapt them better to our taſte and ſentiment. But in many orders of beauty, particularly thoſe of the finer arts, it is requiſite to employ much reaſoning, in order to feel the proper ſentiment; and a falſe reliſh may frequently be corrected by argument and reflection. There are juſt grounds to conclude, that moral beauty partakes much of this latter ſpecies, and demands the aſſiſtance of our intellectual faculties, in order to give it a ſuitable influence on the human mind.

But though this queſtion, concerning the general principles of morals be curious and important, it is needleſs for us, at preſent, to employ farther care in our reſearches concerning it. For if we can be ſo happy, in the courſe of this enquiry, as to diſcover the true origin of morals, it will then eaſily appear how far either ſentiment or reaſon enters into all determinations of this nature *. In order to attain this purpoſe, we ſhall endeavour to follow a very ſimple method: We ſhall analyze that complication of mental qualities, which form what, in common life, we call Personal Merit: We ſhall conſider every attribute of the mind, which renders

* See Appendix firſt.

a man

a man an object either of eſteem and affection, or of hatred and contempt; every habit or ſentiment or faculty, which, if aſcribed to any perſon, implies either praiſe or blame, and may enter into any panegyric or ſatyr of his character and manners. The quick ſenſibility, which, on this head, is ſo univerſal among mankind, gives a philoſopher ſufficient aſſurance, that he can never be conſiderably miſtaken in framing the catalogue, or incur any danger of miſplacing the objects of his contemplation: He needs only enter into his own breaſt for a moment, and conſider whether or not he ſhould deſire to have this or that quality aſcribed to him, and whether ſuch or ſuch an imputation would proceed from a friend or an enemy. The very nature of language guides us almoſt infallibly in forming a judgment of this nature; and as every tongue poſſeſſes one ſet of words which are taken in a good ſenſe, and another in the oppoſite, the leaſt acquaintance with the idiom ſuffices, without any reaſoning, to direct us in collecting and arranging the eſtimable or blameable qualities of men. The only object of reaſoning is to diſcover the circumſtances on both ſides, which are common to theſe qualities; to obſerve that particular in which the eſtimable qualities agree on the one hand, and the blameable on the other; and from thence to reach the foundation of ethics, and find thoſe univerſal principles, from which all cenſure or approbation is ultimately derived.

As this is a queſtion of fact, not of abſtract ſcience, we can only expect ſucceſs, by following the experimental method, and deducing general maxims from a compariſon of particular inſtances. The other ſcientifical method, where a general abſtract principle is firſt eſtabliſhed, and is afterwards branched out into a variety of inferences and concluſions, may be more perfect in itſelf, but ſuits leſs the imperfection of human nature, and is a common ſource of illuſion and miſtake in this as well as in other ſubjects. Men are now cured of their paſſion for hypotheſes and ſyſtems in natural philoſophy, and will hearken to no arguments but thoſe derived from experience. It is full time that they ſhould attempt a like reformation in all moral diſquiſitions; and reject every ſyſtem of ethics, however ſubtile or ingenious, which is not founded on fact and obſervation.

We ſhall begin our enquiry on this head by the conſideration of the ſocial virtues, benevolence and juſtice. The explication of them will probably give us an opening by which the others may be accounted for.

SECTION II.

Of Benevolence.

PART I.

THERE is a principle, ſuppoſed to prevail among many, which is utterly incompatible with all virtue or moral ſentiment; and as it can preceed from nothing but the moſt depraved diſpoſition, ſo in its turn it tends ſtill further to encourage that depravity. This principle is, that all *benevolence* is mere hypocriſy, friendſhip a cheat, public ſpirit a farce, fidelity a ſnare to procure truſt and confidence; and that, while all of us, at bottom, purſue only our private intereſt, we wear theſe fair diſguiſes, in order to put others off their guard, and expoſe them the more to our wiles and machinations. What heart one muſt be poſſeſſed of who profeſſes ſuch principles, and who feels no internal ſentiment that belies ſo pernicious a theory, it is eaſy to imagine: And alſo, what degree of affection and benevolence he can bear to a ſpecies, whom he repreſents under ſuch odious colours, and ſuppoſes

ſo

ſo little ſuſceptible of gratitude or any return of affection. Or if we will not aſcribe theſe principles wholly to a corrupted heart, we muſt, at leaſt, account for them from the moſt careleſs and precipitate examination. Superficial reaſoners, indeed, obſerving many falſe pretences among mankind, and feeling, perhaps, no very ſtrong reſtraint in their own diſpoſition, might draw a general and a haſty concluſion, that all is equally corrupted, and that men, different from all other animals, and indeed from all other ſpecies of exiſtence, admit of no degrees of good or bad, but are, in every inſtance, the ſame creatures under different diſguiſes and appearances.

There is another principle, ſomewhat reſembling the former; which has been much inſiſted on by philoſophers, and has been the foundation of many a ſyſtem; that, whatever affection one may feel, or imagine he feels for others, no paſſion is, or can be diſintereſted; that the moſt generous friendſhip, however ſincere, is a modification of ſelf-love; and that, even unknown to ourſelves, we ſeek only our own gratification, while we appear the moſt deeply engaged in ſchemes for the liberty and happineſs of mankind. By a turn of imagination, by a refinement of reflection, by an enthuſiaſm of paſſion, we ſeem to take part in the intereſts of others, and imagine ourſelves diveſted of all ſelfiſh conſiderations:

But,

But, at bottom, the moſt generous patriot and moſt niggardly miſer, the braveſt hero and moſt abject coward, have, in every action, an equal regard to their own happineſs and welfare.

Whoever concludes from the ſeeming tendency of this opinion, that thoſe, who make profeſſion of it, cannot poſſibly feel the true ſentiments of benevolence, or have any regard for genuine virtue, will often find himſelf, in practice, very much miſtaken. Probity and honour were no ſtrangers to EPICURUS and his ſect. ATTICUS and HORACE ſeem to have enjoyed from nature, and cultivated by reflection, as generous and friendly diſpoſitions as any diſciple of the auſterer ſchools. And among the moderns, HOBBES and LOCKE, who maintained the ſelfiſh ſyſtem of morals, lived moſt irreproachable lives; though the former lay not under any reſtraint of religion, which might ſupply the defects of his philoſophy.

An EPICUREAN or a HOBBIST readily allows, that there is ſuch a thing as friendſhip in the world, without hypocriſy or diſguiſe; though he may attempt, by a philoſophical chymiſtry, to reſolve the elements of this paſſion, if I may ſo ſpeak, into thoſe of another, and explain every affection to be ſelf-love, twiſted and moulded, by a particular turn of imagination, into a variety of appearances. But as the

the ſame turn of imagination prevails not in every man, nor gives the ſame direction to the original paſſion; this is ſufficient, even according to the ſelfiſh ſyſtem, to make the wideſt difference in human characters, and denominate one man virtuous and humane, another vicious and meanly intereſted. I eſteem the man, whoſe ſelf-love, by whatever means, is ſo directed as to give him a concern for others, and render him ſerviceable to ſociety: As I hate or deſpiſe him, who has no regard to any thing beyond his own gratifications and enjoyments. In vain would you ſuggeſt, that theſe characters, though ſeemingly oppoſite, are, at bottom, the ſame, and that a very inconſiderable turn of thought forms the whole difference between them. Each character, notwithſtanding theſe inconſiderable differences, appears to me, in practice, pretty durable and untranſmutable. And I find not in this, more than in other ſubjects, that the natural ſentiments, ariſing from the general appearances of things, are eaſily deſtroyed by ſubtile reflections concerning the minute origin of theſe appearances. Does not the lively, chearful colour of a countenance inſpire me with complacency and pleaſure; even though I learn from philoſophy, that all difference of complexion ariſes from the moſt minute differences of thickneſs, in the moſt minute parts of the ſkin; by means of which a ſuperficies is qualified to reflect one of the original colours of light, and abſorb the others?

But

But though the queſtion, concerning the univerſal or partial ſelfiſhneſs of man be not ſo material, as is uſually imagined, to morality and practice, it is certainly of conſequence in the ſpeculative ſcience of human nature, and is a proper object of curioſity and inquiry. It may not, therefore, be improper, in this place, to beſtow a few reflections upon it *.

The moſt obvious objection to the ſelfiſh hypotheſis, is, that, as it is contrary to common feeling and our moſt unprejudiced notions; there is required the higheſt ſtretch of philoſophy to eſtabliſh ſo extraordinary a paradox. To the moſt careleſs obſerver, there appear to be ſuch diſpoſitions as benevolence and generoſity; ſuch affections as love, friendſhip, compaſſion, gratitude. Theſe ſentiments have their cauſes, effects, objects, and operations, marked by common language and obſervation, and plainly diſtinguiſhed from thoſe of the ſelfiſh paſſions. And as this is the obvious appearance of things, it muſt be admitted; till ſome hypotheſis be diſcovered, which, by penetrating deeper into human nature, may prove the former affections to be nothing but modifications of the latter. All attempts of this kind have hitherto proved fruitleſs, and ſeem to have proceeded entirely, from that love of *ſimplicity*, which has been the ſource of much

* See NOTE [A].

falſe

falſe reaſoning in philoſophy. I ſhall not here enter into any detail on the preſent ſubject. Many able philoſophers have ſhown the inſufficiency of theſe ſyſtems. And I ſhall take for granted what, I believe, the ſmalleſt reflection will make evident to every impartial enquirer.

But the nature of the ſubject furniſhes the ſtrongeſt preſumption, that no better ſyſtem will ever, for the future, be invented, in order to account for the origin of the benevolent from the ſelfiſh affections, and reduce all the various emotions of the human mind to a perfect ſimplicity. The caſe is not the ſame in this ſpecies of philoſophy as in phyſics. Many an hypotheſis in nature, contrary to firſt appearances, has been found, on more accurate ſcrutiny, ſolid and ſatisfactory. Inſtances of this kind are ſo frequent, that a judicious, as well as witty philoſopher *, has ventured to affirm, if there be more than one way, in which any phænomenon may be produced, that there is a general preſumption for its ariſing from the cauſes, which are the leaſt obvious and familiar. But the preſumption always lies on the other ſide, in all inquiries concerning the origin of our paſſions, and of the internal operations of the human mind. The ſimpleſt and moſt obvious cauſe, which can there be aſſigned for any phæno-

* Monſ. Fontenelle.

menon, is probably the true one. When a philoſopher, in the explication of his ſyſtem, is obliged to have recourſe to ſome very intricate and refined reflections, and to ſuppoſe them eſſential to the production of any paſſion or emotion, we have reaſon to be extremely on our guard againſt ſo fallacious an hypotheſis. The affections are not ſuſceptible of any impreſſion from the refinements of reaſon or imagination; and it is always found, that a vigorous exertion of the latter faculties, neceſſarily, from the narrow capacity of the human mind, deſtroys all activity in the former. Our predominant motive or intention is, indeed, frequently concealed from ourſelves, when it is mingled and confounded with other motives, which the mind, from vanity or ſelf-conceit, is deſirous of ſuppoſing more prevalent: But there is no inſtance, that a concealment of this nature has ever ariſen from the abſtruſeneſs and intricacy of the motive. A man, who has loſt a friend and patron, may flatter himſelf, that all his grief ariſes from generous ſentiments, without any mixture of narrow or intereſted conſiderations: But a man, that grieves for a valuable friend, who needed his patronage and protection; how can we ſuppoſe, that his paſſionate tenderneſs ariſes from ſome metaphyſical regards to a ſelf-intereſt, which has no foundation or reality? We may as well imagine, that minute wheels and ſprings, like thoſe of a watch, give

give motion to a loaded waggon, as account for the origin of paſſion from ſuch abſtruſe reflections.

Animals are found ſuſceptible of kindneſs, both to their own ſpecies and to ours; nor is there, in this caſe, the leaſt ſuſpicion of diſguiſe or artifice. Shall we account for all *their* ſentiments too, from refined deductions of ſelf-intereſt? Or if we admit a diſintereſted benevolence in the inferior ſpecies, by what rule of analogy can we refuſe it in the ſuperior?

Love between the ſexes begets a complacency and good-will, very diſtinct from the gratification of an appetite. Tenderneſs to their offspring, in all ſenſible beings, is commonly able alone to counterbalance the ſtrongeſt motives of ſelf-love, and has no manner of dependance on that affection. What intereſt can a fond mother have in view, who loſes her health by aſſiduous attendance on her ſick child, and afterwards languiſhes and dies of grief, when freed, by its death, from the ſlavery of that attendance?

Is gratitude no affection of the human breaſt, or is that a word merely, without any meaning or reality? Have we no ſatisfaction in one man's company above another's, and no deſire of the welfare of our friend, even though abſence or death ſhould

prevent us from all participation in it? Or what is it commonly, that gives us any participation in it, even while alive and present, but our affection and regard to him?

These and a thousand other instances are marks of a general benevolence in human nature, where no *real* interest binds us to the object. And how an *imaginary* interest, known and avowed for such, can be the origin of any passion or emotion, seems difficult to explain. No satisfactory hypothesis of this kind has yet been discovered; nor is there the smallest probability, that the future industry of men will ever be attended with more favourable success.

But farther, if we consider rightly of the matter, we shall find, that the hypothesis, which allows of a disinterested benevolence, distinct from self-love, has really more *simplicity* in it, and is more conformable to the analogy of nature, than that which pretends to resolve all friendship and humanity into this latter principle. There are bodily wants or appetites, acknowledged by every one, which necessarily precede all sensual enjoyment, and carry us directly to seek possession of the object. Thus, hunger and thirst have eating and drinking for their end; and from the gratification of these primary appetites arises a pleasure, which may become the object of another

another ſpecies of deſire or inclination, that is ſecondary and intereſted. In the ſame manner, there are mental paſſions, by which we are impelled immediately to ſeek particular objects, ſuch as fame, or power, or vengeance, without any regard to intereſt; and when theſe objects are attained, a pleaſing enjoyment enſues, as the conſequence of our indulged affections. Nature muſt, by the internal frame and conſtitution of the mind, give an original propenſity to fame, ere we can reap any pleaſure from that acquiſition, or purſue it from motives of ſelf-love, and a deſire of happineſs. If I have no vanity, I take no delight in praiſe: If I be void of ambition, power gives me no enjoyment: If I be not angry, the puniſhment of an adverſary is totally indifferent to me. In all theſe caſes, there is a paſſion, which points immediately to the object, and conſtitutes it our good or happineſs; as there are other ſecondary paſſions, which afterwards ariſe, and purſue it as a part of our happineſs, when once it is conſtituted ſuch by our original affections. Were there no appetites of any kind antecedent to ſelf-love, that propenſity could ſcarcely ever exert itſelf; becauſe we ſhould, in that caſe, have felt few and ſlender pains or pleaſures, and have little miſery or happineſs to avoid or to purſue.

Now where is the difficulty in conceiving, that this may likewiſe be the caſe with benevolence and

friendſhip, and that, from the original frame of our temper, we may feel a deſire of another's happineſs or good, which, by means of that affection, becomes our own good, and is afterwards purſued, from the conjoined motives of benevolence and ſelf-enjoyment? Who ſees not that vengeance, from the force alone of paſſion, may be ſo eagerly purſued, as to make us knowingly neglect every conſideration of eaſe, intereſt, or ſafety; and, like ſome vindictive animals, infuſe our very ſouls into the wounds we give an enemy *? And what a malignant philoſophy muſt it be, that will not allow, to humanity and friendſhip, the ſame privileges, which are undiſputably granted to the darker paſſions of enmity and reſentment? Such a philoſophy is more like a ſatyr than a true delineation or deſcription of human nature; and may be a good foundation for paradoxical wit and raillery, but is a very bad one for any ſerious argument or reaſoning.

PART II.

It may be eſteemed, perhaps, a ſuperfluous taſk to prove, that the benevolent or ſofter affections are ESTIMABLE; and wherever they appear, en-

* Animaſque in vulnere ponunt. VIRG.

Dum alteri noceat, ſui negligens, ſays SENECA of Anger. De Ira, l. i.

gage

gage the approbation, and good-will of mankind. The epithets *ſociable*, *good-natured*, *humane*, *merciful*, *grateful*, *friendly*, *generous*, *beneficent*, are known in all languages, and univerſally expreſs the higheſt merit, which *human nature* is capable of attaining. Where theſe amiable qualities are attended with birth and power and eminent abilities, and diſplay themſelves in the good government or uſeful inſtruction of mankind, they ſeem even to raiſe the poſſeſſors of them above the rank of *human nature*, and make them approach in ſome meaſure to the divine. Exalted capacity, undaunted courage, proſperous ſucceſs; theſe may only expoſe a hero or politician to the envy and ill-will of the public: But as ſoon as the praiſes are added of humane and beneficent; when inſtances are diſplayed of lenity, tenderneſs, or friendſhip; envy itſelf is ſilent, or joins the general voice of applauſe and acclamation.

When Pericles, the great Athenian ſtateſman and general, was on his death-bed, his ſurrounding friends, deeming him now inſenſible, began to indulge their ſorrow for their expiring patron, by enumerating his great qualities and ſucceſſes, his conqueſts and victories, the unuſual length of his adminiſtration, and his nine trophies erected over the enemies of the republic. *You forget*, cries the dying hero, who had heard all, *you forget the moſt eminent of my praiſes, while you dwell ſo much on thoſe vulgar*

advantages, in which fortune had a principal ſhare. You have not obſerved, that no citizen has ever yet worne mourning on my account *.

In men of more ordinary talents and capacity, the ſocial virtues become, if poſſible, ſtill more eſſentially requiſite; there being nothing eminent, in that caſe, to compenſate for the want of them, or preſerve the perſon from our ſevereſt hatred, as well as contempt. A high ambition, an elevated courage, is apt, ſays CICERO, in leſs perfect characters, to degenerate into a turbulent ferocity. The more ſocial and ſofter virtues are there chiefly to be regarded. Theſe are always good and amiable †.

The principal advantage, which JUVENAL diſcovers in the extenſive capacity of the human ſpecies is, that it renders our benevolence alſo more extenſive, and gives us larger opportunities of ſpreading our kindly influence than what are indulged to the inferior creation ‡. It muſt, indeed, be confeſſed, that, by doing good only, can a man truly enjoy the advantages of being eminent. His exalted ſtation, of itſelf, but the more expoſes him to danger and tempeſt. His ſole prerogative is to afford ſhelter to

* PLUT. in PERICLE. † CIC. de Officiis, lib. i.

‡ Sat. xv. 139. & ſeq.

inferiors,

inferiors, who repoſe themſelves under his cover and protection.

But I forget, that it is not my preſent buſineſs to recommend generoſity and benevolence, or to paint, in their true colours, all the genuine charms of the ſocial virtues. Theſe, indeed, ſufficiently engage every heart, on the firſt apprehenſion of them; and it is difficult to abſtain from ſome ſally of panegyric, as often as they occur in diſcourſe or reaſoning. But our object here being more the ſpeculative, than the practical part of morals, it will ſuffice to remark, (what will readily, I believe, be allowed) that no qualities are more intitled to the general good-will and approbation of mankind, than beneficence and humanity, friendſhip and gratitude, natural affection and public ſpirit, or whatever proceeds from a tender ſympathy with others, and a generous concern for our kind and ſpecies. Theſe, wherever they appear, ſeem to transfuſe themſelves, in a manner, into each beholder, and to call forth, in their own behalf, the ſame favourable and affectionate ſentiments, which they exert on all around.

PART III.

We may obſerve, that, in diſplaying the praiſes of any humane, beneficent man, there is one circumſtance which never fails to be amply inſiſted on, namely,

namely, the happineſs and ſatisfaction, derived to ſociety from his intercourſe and good offices. To his parents, we are apt to ſay, he endears himſelf by his pious attachment and duteous care, ſtill more than by the connexions of nature. His children never feel his authority, but when employed for their advantage. With him, the ties of love are conſolidated by beneficence and friendſhip. The ties of friendſhip approach, in a fond obſervance of each obliging office, to thoſe of love and inclination. His domeſtics and dependants have in him a ſure reſource; and no longer dread the power of fortune, but ſo far as ſhe exerciſes it over him. From him the hungry receive food, the naked cloathing, the ignorant and ſlothful ſkill and induſtry. Like the ſun, an inferior miniſter of providence, he cheers, invigorates, and ſuſtains the ſurrounding world.

If confined to private life, the ſphere of his activity is narrower; but his influence is all benign and gentle. If exalted into a higher ſtation, mankind and poſterity reap the fruit of his labours.

As theſe topics of praiſe never fail to be employed, and with ſucceſs, where we would inſpire eſteem for any one; may it not thence be concluded, that the UTILITY, reſulting from the ſocial virtues, forms, at leaſt, a *part* of their merit, and is one ſource of that approbation and regard ſo univerſally paid them.

When

When we recommend even an animal or plant as *uſeful* and *beneficial*, we give it an applauſe and recommendation ſuited to its nature. As, on the other hand, reflection on the baneful influence of any of theſe inferior beings always inſpires us with the ſentiment of averſion. The eye is pleaſed with the proſpect of corn-fields and loaded vineyards; horſes grazing, and flocks paſturing: But flies the view of briars and brambles, affording ſhelter to wolves and ſerpents.

A machine, a piece of furniture, a veſtment, a houſe well contrived for uſe and conveniency, is ſo far beautiful, and is contemplated with pleaſure and approbation. An experienced eye is here ſenſible to many excellencies, which eſcape perſons ignorant and uninſtructed.

Can any thing ſtronger be ſaid in praiſe of a profeſſion, ſuch as merchandize or manufacture, than to obſerve the advantages which it procures to ſociety? And is not a monk and inquiſitor enraged when we treat his order as uſeleſs or pernicious to mankind?

The hiſtorian exults in diſplaying the benefit ariſing from his labours. The writer of romances alleviates or denies the bad conſequences aſcribed to his manner of compoſition.

In

In general, what praiſe is implied in the ſimple epithet, *uſeful!* What reproach in the contrary!

Your Gods, ſays CICERO *, in oppoſition to the EPICUREANS, cannot juſtly claim any worſhip or adoration, with whatever imaginary perfections you may ſuppoſe them endowed. They are totally uſeleſs and unactive. Even the Egyptians, whom you ſo much ridicule, never conſecrated any animal but on account of its utility.

The ſceptics aſſert †, though abſurdly, that the origin of all religious worſhip was derived from the utility of inanimate objects, as the ſun and moon, to the ſupport and well-being of mankind. This is alſo the common reaſon aſſigned by hiſtorians, for the deification of eminent heroes and legiſlators ‡.

To plant a tree, to cultivate a field, to beget children; meritorious acts, according to the religion of ZOROASTER.

In all determinations of morality, this circumſtance of public utility is ever principally in view; and wherever diſputes ariſe, either in philoſophy or common life, concerning the bounds of duty, the

* De Nat. Deor. lib. i.

† SEXT. EMP. adverſus MATH. lib. viii.

‡ DIOD. SIC. paſſim.

queſtion

queſtion cannot, by any means, be decided with greater certainty, than by aſcertaining, on any ſide, the true intereſts of mankind. If any falſe opinion, embraced from appearances, has been found to prevail; as ſoon as farther experience and ſounder reaſoning have given us juſter notions of human affairs; we retract our firſt ſentiments, and adjuſt anew the boundaries of moral good and evil.

Giving alms to common beggars is naturally praiſed; becauſe it ſeems to carry relief to the diſtreſſed and indigent: But when we obſerve the encouragement thence ariſing to idleneſs and debauchery, we regard that ſpecies of charity rather as a weakneſs than a virtue.

Tyrannicide, or the aſſaſſination of uſurpers and oppreſſive princes, was highly extolled in ancient times; becauſe it both freed mankind from many of theſe monſters, and ſeemed to keep the others in awe, whom the ſword or poniard could not reach. But hiſtory and experience having ſince convinced us, that this practice increaſes the jealouſy and cruelty of princes, a Timoleon and a Brutus, though treated with indulgence on account of the prejudices of their times, are now conſidered as very improper models for imitation.

Liberality in princes is regarded as a mark of beneficence: But when it occurs, that the homely bread

bread of the honeſt and induſtrious is often thereby converted into delicious cates for the idle and the prodigal, we ſoon retract our heedleſs praiſes. The regrets of a prince, for having loſt a day, were noble and generous: But had he intended to have ſpent it in acts of generoſity to his greedy courtiers, it was better loſt than miſemployed after that manner.

Luxury, or a refinement on the pleaſures and conveniencies of life, had long been ſuppoſed the ſource of every corruption in government, and the immediate cauſe of faction, ſedition, civil wars, and the total loſs of liberty. It was, therefore, univerſally regarded as a vice, and was an object of declamation to all ſatyriſts, and ſevere moraliſts. Thoſe, who prove, or attempt to prove, that ſuch refinements rather tend to the increaſe of induſtry, civility, and arts, regulate anew our *moral* as well as *political* ſentiments, and repreſent, as laudable and innocent, what had formerly been regarded as pernicious and blameable.

Upon the whole, then, it ſeems undeniable, *that* there is ſuch a ſentiment in human nature as benevolence; *that* nothing can beſtow more merit on any human creature than the poſſeſſion of it in an eminent degree; and *that* a *part*, at leaſt, of its merit ariſes from its tendency to promote the intereſts

tereſts of our ſpecies, and beſtow happineſs on human ſociety. We carry our view into the ſalutary conſequences of ſuch a character and diſpoſition; and whatever has ſo benign an influence, and forwards ſo deſireable an end, is beheld with complacency and pleaſure. The ſocial virtues are never regarded without their beneficial tendencies, nor viewed as barren and unfruitful. The happineſs of mankind, the order of ſociety, the harmony of families, the mutual ſupport of friends, are always conſidered as the reſult of their gentle dominion over the breaſts of men.

How conſiderable a *part* of their merit we ought to aſcribe to their utility, will better appear from future diſquiſitions *; as well as the reaſon, why this circumſtance has ſuch a command over our eſteem and approbation †.

* Sect. 3d and 4th. † Sect. 5th.

SECTION III.

Of JUSTICE.

PART I.

THAT JUSTICE is useful to society, and consequently that *part* of its merit, at least, must arise from that consideration, it would be a superfluous undertaking to prove. That public utility is the *sole* origin of justice, and that reflections on the beneficial consequences of this virtue are the *sole* foundation of its merit; this proposition, being more curious and important, will better deserve our examination and enquiry.

Let us suppose, that nature has bestowed on the human race such profuse *abundance* of all *external* conveniencies, that, without any uncertainty in the event, without any care or industry on our part, every individual finds himself fully provided with whatever his most voracious appetites can want, or luxurious imagination wish or desire. His natural beauty, we shall suppose, surpasses all acquired or-

naments: The perpetual clemency of the ſeaſons renders uſeleſs all cloaths or covering: The raw herbage affords him the moſt delicious fare; the clear fountain, the richeſt beverage. No laborious occupation required: No tillage: No navigation. Muſic, poetry, and contemplation form his ſole buſineſs: Converſation, mirth, and friendſhip his ſole amuſement.

It ſeems evident, that, in ſuch a happy ſtate, every other ſocial virtue would flouriſh, and receive a tenfold encreaſe; but the cautious, jealous virtue of juſtice would never once have been dreamed of. For what purpoſe make a partition of goods, where every one has already more than enough? Why give riſe to property, where there cannot poſſibly be any injury? Why call this object *mine*, when, upon the ſeizing of it by another, I need but ſtretch out my hand to poſſeſs myſelf of what is equally valuable? Juſtice, in that caſe, being totally USELESS, would be an idle ceremonial, and could never poſſibly have place among the catalogue of virtues.

We ſee, even in the preſent neceſſitous condition of mankind, that, wherever any benefit is beſtowed by nature in an unlimited abundance, we leave it always in common among the whole human race, and make no ſubdiviſions of right and property. Water and air, though the moſt neceſſary of all objects, are not challenged as the property of indivi-

duals; nor can any man commit injuſtice by the moſt laviſh uſe and enjoyment of theſe bleſſings. In fertile extenſive countries, with few inhabitants, land is regarded on the ſame footing. And no topic is ſo much inſiſted on by thoſe, who defend the liberty of the ſeas, as the unexhauſted uſe of them in navigation. Were the advantages, procured by navigation, as inexhauſtible, theſe reaſoners had never had any adverſaries to refute; nor had any claims been ever advanced of a ſeparate, excluſive dominion over the ocean.

It may happen, in ſome countries, at ſome periods, that there be eſtabliſhed a property in water, none in land *; if the latter be in greater abundance than can be uſed by the inhabitants, and the former be found, with difficulty, and in very ſmall quantities.

Again; ſuppoſe, that, though the neceſſities of human race continue the ſame as at preſent, yet the mind is ſo enlarged, and ſo replete with friendſhip and generoſity, that every man has the utmoſt tenderneſs for every man, and feels no more concern for his own intereſt than for that of his fellows: It ſeems evident, that the USE of juſtice would, in this caſe, be ſuſpended by ſuch an extenſive benevolence, nor would the diviſions and bar-

* GENESIS, chap. xiii. and xxi.

riers

riers of property and obligation have ever been thought of. Why ſhould I bind another, by a deed or promiſe, to do me any good office, when I know he is already prompted, by the ſtrongeſt inclination, to ſeek my happineſs, and would, of himſelf, perform the deſired ſervice; except the hurt, he thereby receives, be greater than the benefit accruing to me? In which caſe, he knows, that, from my innate humanity and friendſhip, I ſhould be the firſt to oppoſe myſelf to his imprudent generoſity. Why raiſe land-marks between my neighbour's field and mine, when my heart has made no diviſion between our intereſts; but ſhares all his joys and ſorrows with equal force and vivacity as if originally my own? Every man, upon this ſuppoſition, being a a ſecond ſelf to another, would truſt all his intereſts to the diſcretion of every man; without jealouſy, without partition, without diſtinction. And the whole race of mankind would form only one family; where all would lie in common, and be uſed freely, without regard to property; but cautiouſly too, with as entire regard to the neceſſities of each individual, as if our own intereſts were moſt intimately concerned.

In the preſent diſpoſition of the human heart, it would, perhaps, be difficult to find compleat inſtances of ſuch enlarged affections; but ſtill we may obſerve, that the caſe of families approaches to-

wards it; and the ſtronger the mutual benevolence is among the individuals, the nearer it approaches; till all diſtinction of property be, in a great meaſure, loſt and confounded among them. Between married perſons, the cement of friendſhip is by the laws ſuppoſed ſo ſtrong as to aboliſh all diviſion of poſſeſſions; and has often, in reality, the force aſcribed to it. And it is obſervable, that, during the ardour of new enthuſiaſms, where every principle is inflamed into extravagance, the community of goods has frequently been attempted; and nothing but experience of its inconveniencies, from the returning or diſguiſed ſelfiſhneſs of men, could make the imprudent fanatics adopt anew the ideas of juſtice and of ſeparate property. So true is it, that this virtue derives its exiſtence entirely from its neceſſary *uſe* to the intercourſe and ſocial ſtate of mankind.

To make this truth more evident, let us reverſe the foregoing ſuppoſitions; and carrying every thing to the oppoſite extreme, conſider what would be the effect of thoſe new ſituations. Suppoſe a ſociety to fall into ſuch want of all common neceſſaries, that the utmoſt frugality and induſtry cannot preſerve the greateſt number from periſhing, and the whole from extreme miſery: It will readily, I believe, be admitted, that the ſtrict laws of juſtice are ſuſpended, in ſuch a preſſing emergence, and give place to the ſtronger

ſtronger motives of neceſſity and ſelf-preſervation. Is it any crime, after a ſhipwreck, to ſeize whatever means or inſtrument of ſafety one can lay hold of, without regard to former limitations of property? Or if a city beſieged were periſhing with hunger; can we imagine, that men will ſee any means of preſervation before them, and loſe their lives, from a ſcrupulous regard to what, in other ſituations, would be the rules of equity and juſtice? The USE and TENDENCY of that virtue is to procure happineſs and ſecurity, by preſerving order in ſociety: But where the ſociety is ready to periſh from extreme neceſſity, no greater evil can be dreaded from violence and injuſtice; and every man may now provide for himſelf by all the means, which prudence can dictate, or humanity permit. The public, even in leſs urgent neceſſities, opens granaries, without the conſent of proprietors; as juſtly ſuppoſing, that the authority of magiſtracy may, conſiſtent with equity, extend ſo far: But were any number of men to aſſemble, without the tye of laws or civil juriſdiction; would an equal partition of bread in a famine, even without the proprietor's conſent, be regarded as criminal or injurious?

Suppoſe likewiſe, that it ſhould be a virtuous man's fate to fall into the ſociety of ruffians, remote from the protection of laws and government; what con-

duct muſt he embrace in that melancholy ſituation? He ſees ſuch a deſperate rapaciouſneſs prevail; ſuch a diſregard to equity, ſuch contempt of order, ſuch ſtupid blindneſs to future conſequences, as muſt immediately have the moſt tragical concluſion, and muſt terminate in deſtruction to the greater number, and in a total diſſolution of ſociety to the reſt. He, mean while, can have no other expedient than to arm himſelf, to whomever the ſword he ſeizes, or the buckler, may belong: To make proviſion of all means of defence and ſecurity: And his particular regard to juſtice being no longer of USE to his own ſafety or that of others, he muſt conſult the dictates of ſelf preſervation alone, without concern for thoſe who no longer merit his care and attention.

When any man, even in political ſociety, renders himſelf, by his crimes, obnoxious to the public, he is puniſhed by the laws in his goods and perſon; that is, the ordinary rules of juſtice are, with regard to him, ſuſpended for a moment, and it becomes equitable to inflict on him, for the *benefit* of ſociety, what, otherwiſe, he could not ſuffer without wrong or injury.

The rage and violence of public war; what is it but a ſuſpenſion of juſtice among the warring parties, who perceive, that this virtue is now no longer of any *uſe* or advantage to them? The laws of war,

war, which then ſucceed to thoſe of equity and juſtice, are rules calculated for the *advantage* and *utility* of that particular ſtate, in which men are now placed. And were a civilized nation engaged with barbarians, who obſerved no rules even of war; the former muſt alſo ſuſpend their obſervance of them, where they no longer ſerve to any purpoſe; and muſt render every action or rencounter as bloody and pernicious as poſſible to the firſt aggreſſors.

Thus, the rules of equity or juſtice depend entirely on the particular ſtate and condition, in which men are placed, and owe their origin and exiſtence to that UTILITY, which reſults to the public from their ſtrict and regular obſervance. Reverſe, in any conſiderable circumſtance, the condition of men: Produce extreme abundance or extreme neceſſity: Implant in the human breaſt perfect moderation and humanity, or perfect rapaciouſneſs and malice: By rendering juſtice totally *uſeleſs*, you thereby totally deſtroy its eſſence, and ſuſpend its obligation upon mankind.

The common ſituation of ſociety is a medium amidſt all theſe extremes. We are naturally partial to ourſelves, and to our friends; but are capable of learning the advantage reſulting from a more equitable conduct. Few enjoyments are given us from the open and liberal hand of nature; but by art,

labour, and induſtry, we can extract them in great abundance. Hence the ideas of property become neceſſary in all civil ſociety: Hence juſtice derives its uſefulneſs to the public: And hence alone ariſes its merit and moral obligation.

Theſe concluſions are ſo natural and obvious, that they have not eſcaped even the poets, in their deſcriptions of the felicity, attending the golden age or the reign of SATURN. The ſeaſons, in that firſt period of nature, were ſo temperate, if we credit theſe agreeable fictions, that there was no neceſſity for men to provide themſelves with cloaths and houſes, as a ſecurity againſt the violence of heat and cold: The rivers flowed with wine and milk: The oaks yielded honey; and nature ſpontaneouſly produced her greateſt delicacies. Nor were theſe the chief advantages of that happy age. Tempeſts were not alone removed from nature; but thoſe more furious tempeſts were unknown to human breaſts, which now cauſe ſuch uproar, and engender ſuch confuſion. Avarice, ambition, cruelty, ſelfiſhneſs, were never heard of: Cordial affection, compaſſion, ſympathy, were the only movements with which the mind was yet acquainted. Even the punctilious diſtinction of *mine* and *thine* was baniſhed from among that happy race of mortals, and carried with it the very notion of property and obligation, juſtice and injuſtice.

This

This *poetical* fiction of the *golden age* is, in ſome reſpects, of a piece with the *philoſophical* fiction of of the *ſtate of nature*; only that the former is repreſented as the moſt charming and moſt peaceable condition, which can poſſibly be imagined; whereas the latter is painted out as a ſtate of mutual war and violence, attended with the moſt extreme neceſſity. On the firſt origin of mankind, as we are told, their ignorance and ſavage nature were ſo prevalent, that they could give no mutual truſt, but muſt each depend upon himſelf, and his own force or cunning for protection and ſecurity. No law was heard of: No rule of juſtice known: No diſtinction of property regarded: Power was the only meaſure of right; and a perpetual war of all againſt all was the reſult of men's untamed ſelfiſhneſs and barbarity *.

Whether ſuch a condition of human nature could ever exiſt, or if it did, could continue ſo long as to merit the appellation of a *ſtate*, may juſtly be doubted. Men are neceſſarily born in a family-ſociety, at leaſt; and are trained up by their parents to ſome rule of conduct and behaviour. But this muſt be admitted, that, if ſuch a ſtate of mutual war and violence was ever real, the ſuſpenſion of all laws of juſtice from their abſolute inutility, is a neceſſary and infallible conſequence.

* See NOTE [B].

The

The more we vary our views of human life, and the newer and more unuſual the lights are, in which we ſurvey it, the more ſhall we be convinced, that the origin here aſſigned for the virtue of juſtice is real and ſatisfactory.

Were there a ſpecies of creatures, intermingled with men, which, though rational, were poſſeſt of ſuch inferior ſtrength, both of body and mind, that they were incapable of all reſiſtance, and could never, upon the higheſt provocation, make us feel the effects of their reſentment; the neceſſary conſequence, I think, is, that we ſhould be bound, by the laws of humanity, to give gentle uſage to theſe creatures, but ſhould not, properly ſpeaking, lie under any reſtraint of juſtice with regard to them, nor could they poſſeſs any right or property, excluſive of ſuch arbitrary lords. Our intercourſe with them could not be called ſociety, which ſuppoſes a degree of equality; but abſolute command on the one ſide, and ſervile obedience on the other. Whatever we covet, they muſt inſtantly reſign: Our permiſſion is the only tenure, by which they hold their poſſeſſions: Our compaſſion and kindneſs the only check, by which they curb our lawleſs will: And as no inconvenience ever reſults from the exerciſe of a power, ſo firmly eſtabliſhed in nature, the reſtraints of juſtice and property, being totally *uſeleſs*, would never have place in ſo unequal a confederacy.

This

This is plainly the ſituation of men, with regard to animals; and how far theſe may be ſaid to poſſeſs reaſon, I leave it to others to determine. The great ſuperiority of civilized EUROPEANS above barbarous INDIANS, tempted us to imagine ourſelves on the ſame footing with regard to them, and made us throw off all reſtraints of juſtice, and even of humanity, in our treatment of them. In many nations, the female ſex are reduced to like ſlavery, and are rendered incapable of all property, in oppoſition to their lordly maſters. But though the males, when united, have, in all countries, bodily force ſufficient to maintain this ſevere tyranny; yet ſuch are the inſinuation, addreſs, and charms of their fair companions, that women are commonly able to break the confederacy, and ſhare with the other ſex in all the rights and privileges of ſociety.

Were the human ſpecies ſo framed by nature as that each individual poſſeſt within himſelf every faculty, requiſite both for his own preſervation and for the propagation of his kind: Were all ſociety and intercourſe cut off between man and man, by the primary intention of the ſupreme Creator: It ſeems evident, that ſo ſolitary a being would be as much incapable of juſtice, as of ſocial diſcourſe and converſation. Where mutual regards and forbearance ſerve to no manner of purpoſe, they would never direct the conduct of any reaſonable man. The headlong courſe of the paſſions would be checked

checked by no reflection on future conſequences. And as each man is here ſuppoſed to love himſelf alone, and to depend only on himſelf and his own activity for ſafety and happineſs, he would, on every occaſion, to the utmoſt of his power, challenge the preference above every other being, to none of which he is bound by any ties, either of nature or of intereſt.

But ſuppoſe the conjunction of the ſexes to be eſtabliſhed in nature, a family immediately ariſes; and particular rules being found requiſite for its ſubſiſtance, theſe are immediately embraced; though without comprehending the reſt of mankind within their preſcriptions. Suppoſe, that ſeveral families unite together into one ſociety, which is totally diſjoined from all others, the rules, which preſerve peace and order, enlarge themſelves to the utmoſt extent of that ſociety; but becoming then entirely uſeleſs, loſe their force when carried one ſtep farther. But again ſuppoſe, that ſeveral diſtinct ſocieties maintain a kind of intercourſe for mutual convenience and advantage, the boundaries of juſtice ſtill grow larger, in proportion to the largeneſs of men's views, and the force of their mutual connexions. Hiſtory, experience, reaſon ſufficiently inſtruct us in this natural progreſs of human ſentiments, and in the gradual enlargement of our regards to juſtice, in proportion as we become acquainted with the extenſive utility of that virtue.

PART

PART II.

If we examine the *particular* laws, by which juſtice is directed, and property determined; we ſhall ſtill be preſented with the ſame concluſion. The good of mankind is the only object of all theſe laws and regulations. Not only it is requiſite, for the peace and intereſt of ſociety, that men's poſſeſſions ſhould be ſeparated; but the rules, which we follow, in making the ſeparation, are ſuch as can beſt be contrived to ſerve farther the intereſts of ſociety.

We ſhall ſuppoſe, that a creature, poſſeſſed of reaſon, but unacquainted with human nature, deliberates with himſelf what RULES of juſtice or property would beſt promote public intereſt, and eſtabliſh peace and ſecurity among mankind: His moſt obvious thought would be, to aſſign the largeſt poſſeſſions to the moſt extenſive virtue, and give every one the power of doing good, proportioned to his inclination. In a perfect theocracy, where a being infinitely intelligent, governs by particular volitions, this rule would certainly have place, and might ſerve the wiſeſt purpoſes: But were mankind to execute ſuch a law; ſo great is the uncertainty of merit, both from its natural obſcurity, and from the ſelf-conceit of each individual, that no determi-

nate

nate rule of conduct would ever result from it; and the total dissolution of society must be the immediate consequence. Fanatics may suppose, *that dominion is founded on grace*, and *that saints alone inherit the earth*; but the civil magistrate very justly puts these sublime theorists on the same footing with common robbers, and teaches them by the severest discipline, that a rule, which, in speculation, may seem the most advantageous to society, may yet be found, in practice, totally pernicious and destructive.

That there were *religious* fanatics of this kind in ENGLAND, during the civil wars, we learn from history; though it is probable, that the obvious *tendency* of these principles excited such horror in mankind, as soon obliged the dangerous enthusiasts to renounce, or at least conceal their tenets. Perhaps, the *levellers*, who claimed an equal distribution of property, were a kind of *political* fanatics, which arose from the religious species, and more openly avowed their pretensions; as carrying a more plausible appearance, of being practicable in themselves, as well as useful to human society.

It must, indeed, be confessed, that nature is so liberal to mankind, that, were all her presents equally divided among the species, and improved by art and industry, every individual would enjoy all

all the neceſſaries, and even moſt of the comforts of life; nor would ever be liable to any ills, but ſuch as might accidentally ariſe from the ſickly frame and conſtitution of his body. It muſt alſo be confeſſed, that, wherever we depart from this equality, we rob the poor of more ſatisfaction than we add to the rich, and that the ſlight gratification of a frivolous vanity, in one individual, frequently coſts more than bread to many families, and even provinces. It may appear, withal, that the rule of equality, as it would be highly *uſeful*, is not altogether *impracticable*; but has taken place, at leaſt, in an imperfect degree, in ſome republics; particularly that of Sparta; where it was attended, as it is ſaid, with the moſt beneficial conſequences. Not to mention, that the Agrarian laws, ſo frequently claimed in Rome, and carried to execution in many Greek cities, proceeded, all of them, from a general idea of the utility of this principle.

But hiſtorians, and even common ſenſe, may inform us, that, however ſpecious theſe ideas of *perfect* equality may ſeem, they are really, at bottom, *impracticable*; and were they not ſo, would be extremely *pernicious* to human ſociety. Render poſſeſſions ever ſo equal, men's different degrees of art, care, and induſtry, will immediately break that equality. Or if you check theſe virtues, you reduce ſociety to the extremeſt indigence; and inſtead of

of preventing want and beggary in a few, render it unavoidable to the whole community. The moſt rigorous inquiſition too is requiſite to watch every inequality on its firſt appearance; and the moſt ſevere juriſdiction, to puniſh and redreſs it. But beſides, that ſo much authority muſt ſoon degenerate into tyranny, and be exerted with great partialities; who can poſſibly be poſſeſſed of it, in ſuch a ſituation as is here ſuppoſed? Perfect equality of poſſeſſions, deſtroying all ſubordination, weakens extremely the authority of magiſtracy, and muſt reduce all power nearly to a level, as well as property.

We may conclude, therefore, that, in order to eſtabliſh laws for the regulation of property, we muſt be acquainted with the nature and ſituation of man; muſt reject appearances, which may be falſe, though ſpecious; and muſt ſearch for thoſe rules, which are, on the whole, moſt *uſeful* and *beneficial*. Vulgar ſenſe and ſlight experience are ſufficient for this purpoſe; where men give not way to too ſelfiſh avidity, or too extenſive enthuſiaſm.

Who ſees not, for inſtance, that whatever is produced or improved by a man's art or induſtry ought, for ever, to be ſecured to him, in order to give encouragement to ſuch *uſeful* habits nd accompliſh-

ments? That the property ought alſo to deſcend to children and relations, for the ſame *uſeful* purpoſe? That it may be alienated by conſent, in order to beget that commerce and intercourſe, which is ſo *beneficial* to human ſociety? And that all contracts and promiſes ought carefully to be fulfilled, in order to ſecure mutual truſt and confidence, by which the general *intereſt* of mankind is ſo much promoted?

Examine the writers on the laws of nature; and you will always find, that, whatever principles they ſet out with, they are ſure to terminate here at laſt, and to aſſign, as the ultimate reaſon for every rule which they eſtabliſh, the convenience and neceſſities of mankind. A conceſſion thus extorted, in oppoſition to ſyſtems, has more authority, than if it had been made in proſecution of them.

What other reaſon, indeed, could writers ever give, why this muſt be *mine* and that *yours*; ſince uninſtructed nature, ſurely, never made any ſuch diſtinction? The objects, which receive thoſe appellations, are, of themſelves, foreign to us; they are totally disjoined and ſeparated from us; and nothing but the general intereſts of ſociety can form the connexion.

Sometimes, the intereſts of ſociety may require a rule of juſtice in a particular caſe; but may not de-

termine any particular rule, among ſeveral, which are all equally beneficial. In that caſe, the ſlighteſt *analogies* are laid hold of, in order to prevent that indifference and ambiguity, which would be the ſource of perpetual diſſentions. Thus poſſeſſion alone, and firſt poſſeſſion, is ſuppoſed to convey property, where no body elſe has any precedent claim and pretenſion. Many of the reaſonings of lawyers are of this analogical nature, and depend on very ſlight connexions of the imagination.

Does any one ſcruple, in extraordinary caſes, to violate all regard to the private property of individuals, and ſacrifice to public intereſt a diſtinction, which had been eſtabliſhed for the ſake of that intereſt? The ſafety of the people is the ſupreme law: All other particular laws are ſubordinate to it, and dependant on it: And if, in the *common* courſe of things, they be followed and regarded; it is only becauſe the public ſafety and intereſt *commonly* demand ſo equal and impartial an adminiſtration.

Sometimes both *utility* and *analogy* fail, and leave the laws of juſtice in total uncertainty. Thus, it is highly requiſite, that preſcription or long poſſeſſion ſhould convey property; but what number of days or months or years ſhould be ſufficient for that purpoſe, it is impoſſible for reaſon alone to determine. *Civil laws* here ſupply the place of the natural *code*, and aſſign different terms for preſcription, accord-

ing to the different *utilities*, propoſed by the legiſlator. Bills of exchange and promiſſory notes, by the laws of moſt countries, preſcribe ſooner than bonds, and mortgages, and contracts of a more formal nature.

In general, we may obſerve, that all queſtions of property are ſubordinate to the authority of civil laws, which extend, reſtrain, modify, and alter the rules of natural juſtice, according to the particular *convenience* of each community. The laws have, or ought to have, a conſtant reference to the conſtitution of government, the manners, the climate, the religion, the commerce, the ſituation of each ſociety. A late author of genius, as well as learning, has proſecuted this ſubject at large, and has eſtabliſhed, from theſe principles, a ſyſtem of political knowledge, which abounds in ingenious and brilliant thoughts, and is not wanting in ſolidity *.

What is a man's property? Any thing, which it is lawful for him, and for him alone, to uſe. *But what rule have we, by which we can diſtinguiſh theſe objects?* Here we muſt have recourſe to ſtatutes, cuſtoms, precedents, analogies, and a hundred other circumſtances; ſome of which are conſtant and inflexible, ſome variable and arbitrary. But the ulti-

* See NOTE [C].

mate point, in which they all profeſſedly terminate, is, the intereſt and happineſs of human ſociety. Where this enters not into conſideration, nothing can appear more whimſical, unnatural, and even ſuperſtitious, than all or moſt of the laws of juſtice and of property.

Thoſe, who ridicule vulgar ſuperſtitions, and expoſe the folly of particular regards to meats, days, places, poſtures, apparel, have an eaſy taſk; while they conſider all the qualities and relations of the objects, and diſcover no adequate cauſe for that affection or antipathy, veneration or horror, which have ſo mighty an influence over a conſiderable part of mankind. A SYRIAN would have ſtarved rather than taſte pigeon; an EGYPTIAN would not have approached bacon: But if theſe ſpecies of food be examined by the ſenſes of ſight, ſmell, or taſte, or ſcrutinized by the ſciences of chymiſtry, medicine, or phyſics; no difference is ever found between them and any other ſpecies, nor can that preciſe circumſtance be pitched on, which may afford a juſt foundation for the religious paſſion. A fowl on Thurſday is lawful food; on Friday, abominable: Eggs, in this houſe, and in this dioceſe, are permitted during Lent; a hundred paces farther to eat them is a damnable ſin. This earth or building, yeſterday was profane; to-day, by the muttering of certain words, it has become holy and ſacred.

cred. Such reflections as theſe, in the mouth of a philoſopher, one may ſafely ſay, are too obvious to have any influence; becauſe they muſt always, to every man, occur at firſt ſight; and where they prevail not, of themſelves, they are ſurely obſtructed by education, prejudice and paſſion, not by ignorance or miſtake.

It may appear to a careleſs view, or rather, a too abſtracted reflection, that there enters a like ſuperſtition into all the ſentiments of juſtice; and that, if a man ſubjects its objects, or what we call property, to the ſame ſcrutiny of ſenſe and ſcience, he will not, by the moſt accurate enquiry, find any foundation for the difference made by moral ſentiment. I may lawfully nouriſh myſelf from this tree; but the fruit of another of the ſame ſpecies, ten paces off, it is criminal for me to touch. Had I worne this apparel an hour ago, I had merited the ſevereſt puniſhment; but a man, by pronouncing a few magical ſyllables, has now rendered it fit for my uſe and ſervice. Were this houſe placed in the neighbouring territory, it had been immoral for me to dwell in it; but being built on this ſide the river, it is ſubject to a different municipal law, and, by its becoming mine, I incur no blame or cenſure. The ſame ſpecies of reaſoning, it may be thought, which ſo ſucceſsfully expoſes ſuperſtition, is alſo applicable to juſtice; nor is it poſſible, in the one caſe

more than in the other, to point out, in the object, that preciſe quality or circumſtance, which is the foundation of the ſentiment.

But there is this material difference between *ſuperſtition* and *juſtice*, that the former is frivolous, uſeleſs, and burdenſome; the latter is abſolutely requiſite to the well-being of mankind and exiſtence of ſociety. When we abſtract from this circumſtance (for it is too apparent ever to be overlooked) it muſt be confeſſed, that all regards to right and property, ſeem intirely without foundation, as much as the groſſeſt and moſt vulgar ſuperſtition. Were the intereſts of ſociety no way concerned, it is as unintelligible, why another's articulating certain ſounds, implying conſent, ſhould change the nature of my actions with regard to a particular object, as why the reciting of a liturgy by a prieſt, in a certain habit and poſture, ſhould dedicate a heap of brick and timber, and render it, thenceforth and for ever, ſacred *.

Theſe reflections are far from weakening the obligations of juſtice, or diminiſhing any thing from the moſt ſacred attention to property. On the contrary, ſuch ſentiments muſt acquire new force from the preſent reaſoning. For what ſtronger foundation can

* See NOTE [D].

be

be deſired or conceived for any duty, than to obſerve, that human ſociety, or even human nature could not ſubſiſt, without the eſtabliſhment of it; and will ſtill arrive at greater degrees of happineſs and perfection, the more inviolable the regard is, which is paid to that duty?

The dilemma ſeems obvious: As juſtice evidently tends to promote public utility and to ſupport civil ſociety, the ſentiment of juſtice is either derived from our reflecting on that tendency, or like hunger, thirſt, and other appetites, reſentment, love of life, attachment to offſpring, and other paſſions, ariſes from a ſimple original inſtinct in the human breaſt, which nature has implanted for like ſalutary purpoſes. If the latter be the caſe, it follows, that property, which is the object of juſtice, is alſo diſtinguiſhed by a ſimple, original inſtinct, and is not aſcertained by any argument or reflection. But who is there that ever heard of ſuch an inſtinct? Or is this a ſubject, in which new diſcoveries can be made? We may as well expect to diſcover, in the body, new ſenſes, which had before eſcaped all mankind.

But farther, though it ſeems a very ſimple propoſition to ſay, that nature, by any inſtinctive ſentiment, diſtinguiſhes property, yet in reality we ſhall find, that there are required for that purpoſe ten

thouſand different inſtincts, and theſe employed about objects of the greateſt intricacy and niceſt diſcernment. For when a definition of *property* is required, that relation is found to reſolve itſelf into any poſſeſſion acquired by occupation, by induſtry, by preſcription, by inheritance, by contract, *&c.* Can we think, that nature, by an original inſtinct, inſtructs us in all theſe methods of acquiſition?

Theſe words too, inheritance and contract, ſtand for ideas infinitely complicated; and to define them exactly, a hundred volumes of laws, and a thouſand volumes of commentators, have not been found ſufficient. Does nature, whoſe inſtincts in men are all ſimple, embrace ſuch complicated and artificial objects, and create a rational creature, without truſting any thing to the operation of his reaſon?

But even though all this were admitted, it would not be ſatisfactory. Poſitive laws can certainly transfer property. Is it by another original inſtinct, that we recognize the authority of kings and ſenates, and mark all the boundaries of their juriſdiction? Judges too, even though their ſentence be erroneous and illegal, muſt be allowed, for the ſake of peace and order, to have deciſive authority, and ultimately to determine property. Have we original, innate ideas of prætors and chancellors and juries? Who ſees not, that all theſe inſtitutions ariſe merely from the neceſſities of human ſociety?

All

All birds of the ſame ſpecies, in every age and country, build their neſts alike: In this we ſee the force of inſtinct. Men, in different times and places, frame their houſes differently: Here we perceive the influence of reaſon and cuſtom. A like inference may be drawn from comparing the inſtinct of generation and the inſtitution of property.

How great ſoever the variety of municipal laws, it muſt be confeſſed, that their great lines pretty regularly concur; becauſe the purpoſes, to which they tend, are every where exactly ſimilar. In like manner, all houſes have a roof and walls, windows and chimneys; though diverſified in their ſhape, figure, and materials. The purpoſes of the latter, directed to the conveniencies of human life, diſcover not more plainly their origin from reaſon and reflection, than do thoſe of the former, which point all to a like end.

I need not mention the variations, which all the rules of property receive from the finer turns and connexions of the imagination, and from the ſubtilties and abſtractions of law-topics and reaſonings. There is no poſſibility of reconciling this obſervation to the notion of original inſtincts.

What alone will beget a doubt of the theory, on which I inſiſt, is the influence of education and acquired

acquired habits, by which we are ſo accuſtomed to blame injuſtice, that we are not, in every inſtance, conſcious of any immediate reflection on the pernicious conſequences of it. The views the moſt familiar to us are apt, for that very reaſon, to eſcape us; and what we have very frequently performed from certain motives, we are apt likewiſe to continue mechanically, without recalling, on every occaſion, the reflections, which firſt determined us. The convenience, or rather neceſſity, which leads to juſtice, is ſo univerſal, and every where points ſo much to the ſame rules, that the habit takes place in all ſocieties; and it is not without ſome ſcrutiny, that we are able to aſcertain its true origin. The matter, however, is not ſo obſcure, but that, even in common life, we have, every moment, recourſe to the principle of public utility, and aſk, *What muſt become of the world, if ſuch practices prevail? How could ſociety ſubſiſt under ſuch diſorders?* Were the diſtinction or ſeparation of poſſeſſions entirely uſeleſs, can any one conceive, that it ever ſhould have obtained in ſociety?

Thus we ſeem, upon the whole, to have attained a knowledge of the force of that principle here inſiſted on, and can determine what degree of eſteem or moral approbation may reſult from reflections on public intereſt and utility. The neceſſity of juſtice to the ſupport of ſociety is the SOLE foundation of

of that virtue; and ſince no moral excellence is more highly eſteemed, we may conclude, that this circumſtance of uſefulneſs has, in general, the ſtrongeſt energy, and moſt intire command over our ſentiments. It muſt, therefore, be the ſource of a conſiderable part of the merit aſcribed to humanity, benevolence, friendſhip, public ſpirit, and other ſocial virtues of that ſtamp; as it is the SOLE ſource of the moral approbation paid to fidelity, juſtice, veracity, integrity, and thoſe other eſtimable and uſeful qualities and principles. It is entirely agreeable to the rules of philoſophy, and even of common reaſon; where any principle has been found to have a great force and energy in one inſtance, to aſcribe to it a like energy in all ſimilar inſtances. This indeed is NEWTON's chief rule of philoſophizing *.

* Principia, lib. iii.

SECTION IV.

Of POLITICAL SOCIETY.

HAD every man ſufficient *ſagacity* to perceive, at all times, the ſtrong intereſt, which binds him to the obſervance of juſtice and equity, and *ſtrength of mind* ſufficient to perſevere in a ſteady adherence to a general and a diſtant intereſt, in oppoſition to the allurements of preſent pleaſure and advantage: There had never, in that caſe, been any ſuch thing as government or political ſociety, but each man, following his natural liberty, had lived in intire peace and harmony with all others. What need of poſitive laws, where natural juſtice is, of itſelf, a ſufficient reſtraint? Why create magiſtrates, where there never ariſes any diſorder or iniquity? Why abridge our native freedom, when, in every inſtance, the utmoſt exertion of it is found innocent and beneficial? It is evident, that, if government were totally uſeleſs, it never could have place, and that the SOLE foundation of the duty of ALLEGIANCE is the *advantage*, which it procures

procures to ſociety, by preſerving peace and order among mankind.

When a number of political ſocieties are erected, and maintain a great intercourſe together, a new ſet of rules are immediately diſcovered to be *uſeful* in that particular ſituation; and accordingly take place under the title of LAWS of NATIONS. Of this kind are, the ſacredneſs of the perſons of ambaſſadors, abſtaining from poiſoned arms, quarter in war, with others of that kind, which are plainly calculated for the *advantage* of ſtates and kingdoms, in their intercourſe with each other.

The rules of juſtice, ſuch as prevail among individuals, are not intirely ſuſpended among political ſocieties. All princes pretend a regard to the rights of other princes; and ſome, no doubt, without hypocriſy. Alliances and treaties are every day made between independent ſtates, which would only be ſo much waſte of parchment, if they were not found, by experience, to have *ſome* influence and authority. But here is the difference between kingdoms and individuals. Human nature cannot, by any means, ſubſiſt, without the aſſociation of individuals: and that aſſociation never could have place, were no regard paid to the laws of equity and juſtice. Diſorder, confuſion, the war of all againſt all, are the neceſſary conſequences of ſuch a licentious conduct.

But nations can ſubſiſt without intercourſe. They may even ſubſiſt, in ſome degree, under a general war. The obſervance of juſtice, though uſeful among them, is not guarded by ſo ſtrong a neceſſity as among individuals; and the *moral obligation* holds proportion with the *uſefulneſs*. All politicians will allow, and moſt philoſophers, that REASONS of STATE may, in particular emergencies, diſpenſe with the rules of juſtice, and invalidate any treaty or alliance, where the ſtrict obſervance of it would be prejudicial, in a conſiderable degree, to either of the contracting parties. But nothing leſs than the extremeſt neceſſity, it is confeſt, can juſtify individuals in a breach of promiſe, or an invaſion of the properties of others.

In a confederated commonwealth ſuch as the ACHÆAN republic of old, or the SWISS Cantons and United Provinces in modern times; as the league has here a peculiar *utility*, the conditions of union have a peculiar ſacredneſs and authority, and a violation of them would be regarded as equally criminal, or even as more criminal, than any private injury or injuſtice.

The long and helpleſs infancy of man requires the combination of parents for the ſubſiſtance of their young; and that combination requires the virtue of CHASTITY or fidelity to the marriage-bed. Without

Without ſuch an *utility*, it will readily be owned, that ſuch a virtue would never have been thought of *.

An infidelity of this nature is much more *pernicious* in *women* than in *men*. Hence the laws of chaſtity are much ſtricter over the one ſex than over the other.

Theſe rules have all a reference to generation; and yet women paſt child-bearing are no more ſuppoſed to be exempted from them than thoſe in the flower of their youth and beauty. *General rules* are often extended beyond the principle, whence they firſt ariſe; and this in all matters of taſte and ſentiment. It is a vulgar ſtory at Paris, that, during the rage of the Mississippi, a hump-backed fellow went every day into the Rue de Quincempoix, where the ſtock-jobbers met in great crowds, and was well paid for allowing them to make uſe of his hump as a deſk, in order to ſign their contracts upon it. Would the fortune, which he raiſed by this invention, make him a handſome fellow; though it be confeſt, that perſonal beauty ariſes very much from ideas of utility? The imagination is influenced by aſſociations of ideas; which, though they ariſe at firſt from the judgment, are not eaſily altered by every particular exception that occurs to

* See NOTE [E].

us.

us. To which we may add, in the preſent caſe of chaſtity, that the example of the old would be pernicious to the young; and that women, continually foreſeeing that a certain time would bring them the liberty of indulgence, would naturally advance that period, and think more lightly of this whole duty, ſo requiſite to ſociety.

Thoſe who live in the ſame family have ſuch frequent opportunities of licence of this kind, that nothing could preſerve purity of manners, were marriage allowed among the neareſt relations, or any intercourſe of love between them ratified by law and cuſtom. INCEST, therefore, being *pernicious* in a ſuperior degree, has alſo a ſuperior turpitude and moral deformity annexed to it.

What is the reaſon, why, by the ATHENIAN laws, one might marry a half-ſiſter by the father, but not by the mother? Plainly this: The manners of the ATHENIANS were ſo reſerved, that a man was never permitted to approach the woman's apartment, even in the ſame family, unleſs where he viſited his own mother. His ſtep-mother and her children were as much ſhut up from him as the woman of any other family, and there was as little danger of any criminal correſpondence between them. Uncles and nieces, for a like reaſon, might marry at ATHENS; but neither theſe, nor half-brothers and ſiſters, could contract

contract that alliance at ROME, where the intercourſe was more open between the ſexes. Public utility is the cauſe of all theſe variations.

To repeat, to a man's prejudice, any thing that eſcaped him in private converſation, or to make any ſuch uſe of his private letters, is highly blamed. The free and ſocial intercourſe of minds muſt be extremely checked, where no ſuch rules of fidelity are eſtabliſhed.

Even in repeating ſtories, whence we can ſee no ill conſequences to reſult, the giving of one's authors is regarded as a piece of indiſcretion, if not of immorality. Theſe ſtories, in paſſing from hand to hand, and receiving all the uſual variations, frequently come about to the perſons concerned, and produce animoſities and quarrels among people, whoſe intentions are the moſt innocent and inoffenſive.

To pry into ſecrets, to open or even read the letters of others, to play the ſpy upon their words and looks and actions; what habits more inconvenient in ſociety? What habits, of conſequence, more blameable?

This principle is alſo the foundation of moſt of the laws of good manners; a kind of leſſer mo-

rality, calculated for the eaſe of company and converſation. Too much or too little ceremony are both blamed, and every thing, which promotes eaſe, without an indecent familiarity, is uſeful and laudable.

Conſtancy in friendſhips, attachments, and familiarities, is commendable, and is requiſite to ſupport truſt and good correſpondence in ſociety. But in places of general, though caſual concourſe, where the purſuit of health and pleaſure brings people promiſcuouſly together, public conveniency has diſpenſed with this maxim; and cuſtom there promotes an unreſerved converſation for the time, by indulging the privilege of dropping afterwards every indifferent acquaintance, without breach of civility or good manners.

Even in ſocieties, which are eſtabliſhed on principles the moſt immoral, and the moſt deſtructive to the intereſts of the general ſociety, there are required certain rules, which a ſpecies of falſe honour, as well as private intereſt, engages the members to obſerve. Robbers and pyrates, it has often been remarked, could not maintain their pernicious confederacy, did they not eſtabliſh a new diſtributive juſtice among themſelves, and recall thoſe laws of equity, which they have violated with the reſt of mankind.

I hate

I hate a drinking companion, ſays the Greek proverb, who never forgets. The follies of the laſt debauch ſhould be buried in eternal oblivion, in order to give full ſcope to the follies of the next.

Among nations, where an immoral gallantry, if covered with a thin veil of myſtery, is, in ſome degree, authorized by cuſtom, there immediately ariſe a ſet of rules, calculated for the conveniency of that attachment. The famous court or parliament of love in Provence decided formerly all difficult caſes of this nature.

In ſocieties for play, there are laws required for the conduct of the game; and theſe laws are different in each game. The foundation, I own, of ſuch ſocieties is frivolous; and the laws are, in a great meaſure, though not altogether, capricious and arbitrary. So far is there a material difference between them and the rules of juſtice, fidelity, and loyalty. The general ſocieties of men are abſolutely requiſite for the ſubſiſtence of the ſpecies; and the public conveniency, which regulates morals, is inviolably eſtabliſhed in the nature of man, and of the world, in which he lives. The compariſon, therefore, in theſe reſpects, is very imperfect. We may only learn from it the neceſſity of rules, wherever men have any intercourſe with each other.

They cannot even paſs each other on the road without rules. Waggoners, coachmen, and poſtilions have principles, by which they give way; and theſe are chiefly founded on mutual eaſe and convenience. Sometimes alſo they are arbitrary, at leaſt dependent on a kind of capricious analogy, like many of the reaſonings of lawyers *.

To carry the matter farther, we may obſerve, that it is impoſſible for men ſo much as to murder each other without ſtatutes, and maxims, and an idea of juſtice and honour. War has its laws as well as peace; and even that ſportive kind of war, carried on among wreſtlers, boxers, cudgel-players, gladiators, is regulated by fixed principles. Common intereſt and utility beget infallibly a ſtandard of right and wrong among the parties concerned.

* See NOTE [F].

SECTION V.

Why Utility pleases.

PART I.

IT ſeems ſo natural a thought to aſcribe to their utility the praiſe, which we beſtow on the ſocial virtues, that one would expect to meet with this principle every where in moral writers, as the chief foundation of their reaſoning and inquiry. In common life, we may obſerve, that the circumſtance of utility is always appealed to; nor is it ſuppoſed, that a greater eulogy can be given to any man, than to diſplay his uſefulneſs to the public, and enumerate the ſervices, which he has performed to mankind and ſociety. What praiſe, even of an inanimate form, if the regularity and elegance of its parts deſtroy not its fitneſs for any uſeful purpoſe! And how ſatisfactory an apology for any diſproportion or ſeeming deformity, if we can ſhow the neceſſity of that particular conſtruction for the uſe intended! A ſhip appears more beautiful to an artiſt, or one moderately ſkilled in navigation, where its prow is wide

and ſwelling beyond its poop, than if it were framed with a preciſe geometrical regularity, in contradiction to all the laws of mechanics. A building, whoſe doors and windows were exact ſquares, would hurt the eye by that very proportion; as ill adapted to the figure of a human creature, for whoſe ſervice the fabric was intended. What wonder then, that a man, whoſe habits and conduct are hurtful to ſociety, and dangerous or pernicious to every one who has an intercourſe with him, ſhould, on that account, be an object of diſapprobation, and communicate to every ſpectator the ſtrongeſt ſentiments of diſguſt and hatred *?

But perhaps the difficulty of accounting for theſe effects of uſefulneſs, or its contrary, has kept philoſophers from admitting them into their ſyſtems of ethics, and has induced them rather to employ any other principle, in explaining the origin of moral good and evil. But it is no juſt reaſon for rejecting any principle, confirmed by experience, that we cannot give a ſatisfactory account of its origin, nor are able to reſolve it into other more general principles. And if we would employ a little thought on the preſent ſubject, we need be at no loſs to account for the influence of utility, and to deduce it

* See NOTE [G].

from

from principles, the moſt known and avowed in human nature.

From the apparent uſefulneſs of the ſocial virtues, it has readily been inferred by ſceptics, both ancient and modern, that all moral diſtinctions ariſe from education, and were, at firſt, invented, and afterwards encouraged, by the art of politicians, in order to render men tractable, and ſubdue their natural ferocity and ſelfiſhneſs, which incapacitated them for ſociety. This principle indeed of precept and education, muſt be ſo far owned to have a powerful influence, that it may frequently encreaſe or diminiſh, beyond their natural ſtandard, the ſentiments of approbation or diſlike; and may even, in particular inſtances, create, without any natural principle, a new ſentiment of this kind; as is evident in all ſuperſtitious practices and obſervances: But that *all* moral affection or diſlike ariſes from this origin, will never ſurely be allowed by any judicious enquirer. Had nature made no ſuch diſtinction, founded on the original conſtitution of the mind, the words, *honourable* and *ſhameful*, *lovely* and *odious*, *noble* and *deſpicable*, had never had place in any language; nor could politicians, had they invented theſe terms, ever have been able to render them intelligible, or make them convey any idea to the audience. So that nothing can be more ſuperficial than this paradox of the ſceptics; and it were well,

if, in the abſtruſer ſtudies of logic and metaphyſics, we could as eaſily obviate the cavils of that ſect, as in the more practical and intelligible ſciences of politics and morals.

The ſocial virtues muſt, therefore, be allowed to have a natural beauty and amiableneſs, which, at firſt, antecedent to all precept or education, recommends them to the eſteem of uninſtructed mankind, and engages their affections. And as the public utility of theſe virtues is the chief circumſtance, whence they derive their merit, it follows, that the end, which they have a tendency to promote, muſt be ſome way agreeable to us, and take hold of ſome natural affection. It muſt pleaſe, either from conſiderations of ſelf intereſt, or from more generous motives and regards.

It has often been aſſerted, that, as every man has a ſtrong connexion with ſociety, and perceives the impoſſibility of his ſolitary ſubſiſtence, he becomes, on that account, favourable to all thoſe habits or principles, which promote order in ſociety, and inſure to him the quiet poſſeſſion of ſo ineſtimable a bleſſing. As much as we value our own happineſs and welfare, as much muſt we value the practice of juſtice and humanity, by which alone the ſocial confederacy can be maintained, and every man reap the fruits of mutual protection and aſſiſtance.

This

This deduction of morals from ſelf-love, or a regard to private intereſt, is an obvious thought, and has not ariſen wholly from the wanton ſallies and ſportive aſſaults of the ſceptics. To mention no others, POLYBIUS, one of the graveſt and moſt judicious, as well as moſt moral writers of antiquity, has aſſigned this ſelfiſh origin to all our ſentiments of virtue *. But though the ſolid, practical ſenſe of that author, and his averſion to all vain ſubtilties, render his authority on the preſent ſubject very conſiderable; yet is not this an affair to be decided by authority, and the voice of nature and experience ſeems plainly to oppoſe the ſelfiſh theory.

We frequently beſtow praiſe on virtuous actions, performed in very diſtant ages and remote countries; where the utmoſt ſubtilty of imagination would not diſcover any appearance of ſelf-intereſt, or find any connexion of our preſent happineſs and ſecurity with events ſo widely ſeparated from us.

A generous, a brave, a noble deed, performed by an adverſary, commands our approbation; while in its conſequences it may be acknowledged prejudicial to our particular intereſt.

Where private advantage concurs with general affection for virtue, we readily perceive and avow the

* See NOTE [H].

mixture

mixture of theſe diſtinct ſentiments, which have a very different feeling and influence on the mind. We praiſe, perhaps, with more alacrity, where the generous, humane action contributes to our particular intereſt: But the topics of praiſe, which we inſiſt on, are very wide of this circumſtance. And we may attempt to bring over others to our ſentiments, without endeavouring to convince them, that they reap any advantage from the actions which we recommend to their approbation and applauſe.

Frame the model of a praiſe-worthy character, conſiſting of all the moſt amiable moral virtues: Give inſtances, in which theſe diſplay themſelves after an eminent and extraordinary manner: You readily engage the eſteem and approbation of all your audience, who never ſo much as enquire in what age and country the perſon lived, who poſſeſſed theſe noble qualities: A circumſtance, however, of all others, the moſt material to ſelf-love, or a concern for our own individual happineſs.

Once on a time, a ſtateſman, in the ſhock and conteſt of parties, prevailed ſo far as to procure, by his eloquence, the baniſhment of an able adverſary; whom he ſecretly followed, offering him money for his ſupport during his exile, and ſoothing him with topics of conſolation in his misfortunes. *Alas!* cries the baniſhed ſtateſman, *with what regret muſt I leave*

I leave my friends in this city, where even enemies are ſo generous! Virtue, though in an enemy, here pleaſed him: And we alſo give it the juſt tribute of praiſe and approbation; nor do we retract theſe ſentiments, when we hear, that the action paſt at ATHENS, about two thouſand years ago, and that the perſons names were ESCHINES and DEMOSTHENES.

What is that to me? There are few occaſions, when this queſtion is not pertinent: And had it that univerſal, infallible influence ſuppoſed, it would turn into ridicule every compoſition, and almoſt every converſation, which contain any praiſe or cenſure of men and manners.

It is but a weak ſubterfuge, when preſſed by theſe facts and arguments, to ſay, that we tranſport ourſelves, by the force of imagination, into diſtant ages and countries, and conſider the advantage, which we ſhould have reaped from theſe characters, had we been contemporaries, and had any commerce with the perſons. It is not conceivable, how a *real* ſentiment or paſſion can ever ariſe from a known *imaginary* intereſt; eſpecially when our *real* intereſt is ſtill ſtept in view, and is often acknowledged to be entirely diſtinct from the imaginary, and even ſometimes oppoſite to it.

A man,

A man, brought to the brink of a precipice, cannot look down without trembling; and the ſentiment of *imaginary* danger actuates him, in oppoſition to the opinion and belief of *real* ſafety. But the imagination is here aſſiſted by the preſence of a ſtriking object; and yet prevails not, except it be alſo aided by novelty, and the unuſual appearance of the object. Cuſtom ſoon reconciles us to heights and precipices, and wears off theſe falſe and deluſive terrors. The reverſe is obſervable in the eſtimates, which we form of characters and manners; and the more we habituate ourſelves to an accurate ſcrutiny of morals, the more delicate feeling do we acquire of the moſt minute diſtinctions between vice and virtue. Such frequent occaſion, indeed, have we, in common life, to pronounce all kinds of moral determinations, that no object of this kind can be new or unuſual to us; nor could any *falſe* views or prepoſſeſſions maintain their ground againſt an experience, ſo common and familiar. Experience being chiefly what forms the aſſociations of ideas, it is impoſſible, that any aſſociation could eſtabliſh and ſupport itſelf, in direct oppoſition to that principle.

Uſefulneſs is agreeable, and engages our approbation. This is a matter of fact, confirmed by daily obſervation. But, *uſeful?* For what? For ſome

ſome body's intereſt, ſurely. Whoſe intereſt then? Not our own only: For our approbation frequently extends farther. It muſt, therefore, be the intereſt of thoſe, who are ſerved by the character or action approved of; and theſe we may conclude, however remote, are not totally indifferent to us. By opening up this principle, we ſhall diſcover one great ſource of moral diſtinctions.

PART II.

Self-love is a principle in human nature of ſuch extenſive energy, and the intereſt of each individual is, in general, ſo cloſely connected with that of the community, that thoſe philoſophers were excuſable, who fancied, that all our concern for the public might be reſolved into a concern for our own happineſs and preſervation. They ſaw, every moment, inſtances of approbation or blame, ſatisfaction or diſpleaſure towards characters and actions; they denominated the objects of theſe ſentiments, *virtues* or *vices*; they obſerved, that the former had a tendency to encreaſe the happineſs, and the latter the miſery of ſociety; they aſked, whether it was poſſible that we could have any general concern for ſociety, or any diſintereſted reſentment of the welfare or injury of others; they found it ſimpler to conſider all theſe ſentiments as modifications of ſelf-

love;

love; and they diſcovered a pretence, at leaſt, for this unity of principle, in that cloſe union of intereſt, which is ſo obſervable between the public and each individual.

But notwithſtanding this frequent confuſion of intereſts, it is eaſy to attain what natural philoſophers, after lord BACON, have affected to call the *experimentum crucis*, or that experiment, which points out the right way in any doubt or ambiguity. We have found inſtances, in which private intereſt was ſeparated from public; in which it was even contrary: And yet we obſerved the moral ſentiment to continue, notwithſtanding this disjunction of intereſts. And wherever theſe diſtinct intereſts ſenſibly concurred, we always found a ſenſible encreaſe of the ſentiment, and a more warm affection to virtue, and deteſtation of vice, or what we properly call, *gratitude* and *revenge*. Compelled by theſe inſtances, we muſt renounce the theory, which accounts for every moral ſentiment by the principle of ſelf-love. We muſt adopt a more public affection, and allow, that the intereſts of ſociety are not, even on their own account, entirely indifferent to us. Uſefuleſs is only a tendency to a certain end; and it is a contradiction in terms, that any thing pleaſes as means to an end, where the end itſelf no wiſe affects us. If therefore uſefulneſs be a ſource of moral ſentiment, and if this uſefulneſs be not always

conſidered with a reference to ſelf; it follows, that every thing, which contributes to the happineſs of ſociety, recommends itſelf directly to our approbation and good-will. Here is a principle, which accounts, in great part, for the origin of morality: And what need we ſeek for abſtruſe and remote ſyſtems, when there occurs one ſo obvious and natural *?

Have we any difficulty to comprehend the force of humanity and benevolence? Or to conceive, that the very aſpect of happineſs, joy, proſperity, gives pleaſure; that of pain, ſuffering, ſorrow, communicates uneaſineſs? The human countenance, ſays HORACE †, borrows ſmiles or tears from the human countenance. Reduce a perſon to ſolitude, and he loſes all enjoyment, except either of the ſenſual or ſpeculative kind; and that becauſe the movements of his heart are not forwarded by correſpondent movements in his fellow-creatures. The ſigns of ſorrow and mourning, though arbitrary, affect us with melancholy; but the natural ſymptoms, tears and cries and groans, never fail to infuſe compaſſion and uneaſineſs. And if the effects of miſery touch us in ſo lively a manner; can we be

* See NOTE [I].

† Uti ridentibus arrident, ita flentibus adflent
Humani vultus. HOR.

ſuppoſed

ſuppoſed altogether inſenſible or indifferent towards its cauſes; when a malicious or treacherous character and behaviour are preſented to us?

We enter, I ſhall ſuppoſe, into a convenient, warm, well-contrived apartment: We neceſſarily receive a pleaſure from its very ſurvey; becauſe it preſents us with the pleaſing ideas of eaſe, ſatisfaction, and enjoyment. The hoſpitable, good-humoured, humane landlord appears. This circumſtance ſurely muſt embelliſh the whole; nor can we eaſily forbear reflecting, with pleaſure, on the ſatisfaction which reſults to every one from his intercourſe and good-offices.

His whole family by the freedom, eaſe, confidence, and calm enjoyment, diffuſed over their countenances, ſufficiently expreſs their happineſs. I have a pleaſing ſympathy in the proſpect of ſo much joy, and can never conſider the ſource of it, without the moſt agreeable emotions.

He tells me, that an oppreſſive and powerful neighbour had attempted to diſpoſſeſs him of his inheritance, and had long diſturbed all his innocent and ſocial pleaſures. I feel an immediate indignation ariſe in me againſt ſuch violence and injury.

But it is no wonder, he adds, that a private wrong ſhould proceed from a man, who had enſlaved provinces,

vinces, depopulated cities, and made the field and ſcaffold ſtream with human blood. I am ſtruck with horror at the proſpect of ſo much miſery, and am actuated by the ſtrongeſt antipathy againſt its author.

In general, it is certain, that, wherever we go, whatever we reflect on or converſe about, every thing ſtill preſents us with the view of human happineſs or miſery, and excites in our breaſts a ſympathetic movement of pleaſure or uneaſineſs. In our ſerious occupations, in our careleſs amuſements, this principle ſtill exerts its active energy.

A man, who enters the theatre, is immediately ſtruck with the view of ſo great a multitude, participating of one common amuſement; and experiences, from their very aſpect, a ſuperior ſenſibility or diſpoſition of being affected with every ſentiment, which he ſhares with his fellow-creatures.

He obſerves the actors to be animated by the appearance of a full audience, and raiſed to a degree of enthuſiaſm, which they cannot command in any ſolitary or calm moment.

Every movement of the theatre, by a ſkilful poet, is communicated, as it were by magic, to the ſpectators; who weep, tremble, reſent, rejoice, and are

enflamed with all the variety of paſſions, which actuate the ſeveral perſonages of the drama.

Where any event croſſes our wiſhes, and interrupts the happineſs of the favourite characters, we feel a ſenſible anxiety and concern. But where their ſufferings proceed from the treachery, cruelty or tyranny of an enemy, our breaſts are affected with the livelieſt reſentment againſt the author of theſe calamities.

It is here eſteemed contrary to the rules of art to repreſent any thing cool and indifferent. A diſtant friend, or a confident, who has no immediate intereſt in the cataſtrophe, ought, if poſſible, to be avoided by the poet; as communicating a like indifference to the audience, and checking the progreſs of the paſſions.

Few ſpecies of poetry are more entertaining than *paſtoral*; and every one is ſenſible, that the chief ſource of its pleaſure ariſes from thoſe images of a gentle and tender tranquillity, which it repreſents in its perſonages, and of which it communicates a like ſentiment to the reader. SANNAZARIUS, who transferred the ſcene to the ſea-ſhore, though he preſented the moſt magnificent object in nature, is confeſſed to have erred in his choice. The idea of toil, labour, and danger, ſuffered by the fiſhermen,

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is painful; by an unavoidable ſympathy, which attends every conception of human happineſs or miſery.

When I was twenty, ſays a FRENCH poet, OVID was my choice: Now I am forty, I declare for HORACE. We enter, to be ſure, more readily into ſentiments, which reſemble thoſe we feel every day: But no paſſion, when well repreſented, can be entirely indifferent to us; becauſe there is none, of which every man has not, within him, at leaſt, the ſeeds and firſt principles. It is the buſineſs of poetry to bring every affection near to us by lively imagery and repreſentation, and make it look like truth and reality: A certain proof, that, wherever that reality is found, our minds are diſpoſed to be ſtrongly affected by it.

Any recent event or piece of news, by which the fortunes of ſtates, provinces, or many individuals are affected, is extremely intereſting even to thoſe whoſe welfare is not immediately engaged. Such intelligence is propagated with celerity, heard with avidity, and enquired into with attention and concern. The intereſts of ſociety appear, on this occaſion, to be, in ſome degree, the intereſt of each individual. The imagination is ſure to be affected; though the paſſions excited may not always be ſo

ſtrong and ſteady as to have great influence on the conduct and behaviour.

The peruſal of a hiſtory ſeems a calm entertainment; but would be no entertainment at all, did not our hearts beat with correſpondent movements to thoſe deſcribed by the hiſtorian.

THUCYDIDES and GUICCIARDIN ſupport with difficulty our attention; while the former deſcribes the trivial rencounters of the ſmall cities of GREECE, and the latter the harmleſs wars of PISA. The few perſons intereſted, and the ſmall intereſt fill not the imagination, and engage not the affections. The deep diſtreſs of the numerous ATHENIAN army before SYRACUSE; the danger, which ſo nearly threatens VENICE; theſe excite compaſſion; theſe move terror and anxiety.

The indifferent, unintereſting ſtile of SUETONIUS, equally with the maſterly pencil of TACITUS, may convince us of the cruel depravity of NERO or TIBERIUS: But what a difference of ſentiment! While the former coldly relates the facts; and the latter ſets before our eyes the venerable figures of a SORANUS and a THRASEA, intrepid in their fate, and only moved by the melting ſorrows of their friends and kindred. What ſympathy then touches every

every human heart! What indignation againſt the tyrant, whoſe cauſeleſs fear or unprovoked malice gave riſe to ſuch deteſtable barbarity!

If we bring theſe ſubjects nearer: If we remove all ſuſpicion of fiction and deceit: What powerful concern is excited, and how much ſuperior, in many inſtances, to the narrow attachments of ſelf-love and private intereſt! Popular ſedition, party zeal, a devoted obedience to factious leaders; theſe are ſome of the moſt viſible, though leſs laudable effects of this ſocial ſympathy in human nature.

The frivolouſneſs of the ſubject too, we may obſerve, is not able to detach us entirely from what carries an image of human ſentiment and affection.

When a perſon ſtutters, and pronounces with difficulty, we even ſympathize with this trivial uneaſineſs, and ſuffer for him. And it is a rule in criticiſm, that every combination of ſyllables or letters, which gives pain to the organs of ſpeech in the recital, appears alſo, from a ſpecies of ſympathy, harſh and diſagreeable to the ear. Nay, when we run over a book with our eye, we are ſenſible of ſuch unharmonious compoſition; becauſe we ſtill imagine, that a perſon recites it to us, and ſuffers from the pronunciation of theſe jarring ſounds. So delicate is our ſympathy!

Eaſy and unconſtrained poſtures and motions are always beautiful: An air of health and vigour is agreeable: Cloaths which warm, without burthening the body; which cover, without impriſoning the limbs, are well-faſhioned. In every judgment of beauty, the feelings of the perſons affected enter into conſideration, and communicate to the ſpectator ſimilar touches of pain or pleaſure *. What wonder, then, if we can pronounce no judgment concerning the character and conduct of men, without conſidering the tendencies of their actions, and the happineſs or miſery which thence ariſes to ſociety? What aſſociation of ideas would ever operate, were that principle here totally unactive †?

If any man, from a cold inſenſibility, or narrow ſelfiſhneſs of temper, is unaffected with the images of human happineſs or miſery, he muſt be equally indifferent to the images of vice and virtue: As, on the other hand, it is always found, that a warm concern for the intereſts of our ſpecies is attended with a delicate feeling of all moral diſtinctions; a ſtrong reſentment of injury done to men; a lively

* "Decentior equus cujus aſtricta ſunt ilia; ſed idem velocior. Pulcher aſpectu ſit athleta, cujus lacertos exercitatio expreſſit; idem certamini paratior. Nunquam enim *ſpecies* ab *utilitate* dividitur. Sed hoc quidem diſcernere modici judicii eſt." QUINTILIAN Inſt. lib. viii. cap. 3.

† See NOTE [K].

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approbation of their welfare. In this particular, though great ſuperiority is obſervable of one man above another; yet none are ſo entirely indifferent to the intereſt of their fellow-creatures, as to perceive no diſtinctions of moral good and evil, in conſequence of the different tendencies of actions and principles. How, indeed, can we ſuppoſe it poſſible of any one, who wears a human heart, that, if there be ſubjected to his cenſure, one character or ſyſtem of conduct, which is beneficial, and another, which is pernicious, to his ſpecies or community, he will not ſo much as give a cool preference to the former, or aſcribe to it the ſmalleſt merit or regard? Let us ſuppoſe ſuch a perſon ever ſo ſelfiſh; let private intereſt have ingroſſed ever ſo much his attention; yet in inſtances, where that is not concerned, he muſt unavoidably feel *ſome* propenſity to the good of mankind, and make it an object of choice, if every thing elſe be equal. Would any man, who is walking along, tread as willingly on another's gouty toes, whom he has no quarrel with, as on the hard flint and pavement? There is here ſurely a difference in the caſe. We ſurely take into conſideration the happineſs and miſery of others, in weighing the ſeveral motives of action, and incline to the former, where no private regards draw us to ſeek our own promotion or advantage by the injury of our fellow-creatures. And if the principles of humanity are capable, in many inſtances, of influencing our ac-

tions, they muſt, at all times, have *ſome* authority over our ſentiments, and give us a general approbation of what is uſeful to ſociety, and blame of what is dangerous or pernicious. The degrees of theſe ſentiments may be the ſubject of controverſy; but the reality of their exiſtence, one ſhould think, muſt be admitted, in every theory or ſyſtem.

A creature, abſolutely malicious and ſpiteful, were there any ſuch in nature, muſt be worſe than indifferent to the images of vice and virtue. All his ſentiments muſt be inverted, and directly oppoſite to thoſe, which prevail in the human ſpecies. Whatever contributes to the good of mankind, as it croſſes the conſtant bent of his wiſhes and deſires, muſt produce uneaſineſs and diſapprobation; and on the contrary, whatever is the ſource of diſorder and miſery in ſociety, muſt, for the ſame reaſon, be regarded with pleaſure and complacency. TIMON, who, probably from his affected ſpleen, more than any inveterate malice, was denominated the man-hater, embraced ALCIBIADES, with great fondneſs. *Go on, my boy!* cried he, *acquire the confidence of the people: You will one day, I foreſee, be the cauſe of great calamities to them**: Could we admit the two principles of the MANICHEANS, it is an infallible conſequence, that their ſentiments of human

* PLUTARCH in vita ALC.

actions,

actions, as well as of every thing elſe, muſt be totally oppoſite, and that every inſtance of juſtice and humanity, from its neceſſary tendency, muſt pleaſe the one deity and diſpleaſe the other. All mankind ſo far reſemble the good principle, that, where intereſt or revenge or envy perverts not our diſpoſition, we are always inclined, from our natural philanthropy, to give the preference to the happineſs of ſociety, and conſequently to virtue, above its oppoſite. Abſolute, unprovoked, diſintereſted malice has never, perhaps, place in any human breaſt; or if it had, muſt there pervert all the ſentiments of morals, as well as the feelings of humanity. If the cruelty of NERO be allowed entirely voluntary, and not rather the effect of conſtant fear and reſentment; it is evident, that TIGELLINUS, preferably to SENECA or BURRHUS, muſt have poſſeſſed his ſteady and uniform approbation.

A ſtateſman or patriot, who ſerves our own country, in our own time, has always a more paſſionate regard paid him, than one whoſe beneficial influence operated on diſtant ages or remote nations; where the good, reſulting from his generous humanity, being leſs connected with us, ſeems more obſcure, and affects us with a leſs lively ſympathy. We may own the merit to be equally great, though our ſentiments are not raiſed to an equal height, in both caſes. The judgment here corrects the inequalities

qualities of our internal emotions and perceptions; in like manner, as it preſerves us from error, in the ſeveral variations of images, preſented to our external ſenſes. The ſame object, at a double diſtance, really throws on the eye a picture of but half the bulk; yet we imagine that it appears of the ſame ſize in both ſituations; becauſe we know, that, on our approach to it, its image would expand on the eye, and that the difference conſiſts not in the object itſelf, but in our poſition with regard to it. And, indeed, without ſuch correction of appearances, both in internal and external ſentiment, men could never think or talk ſteadily on any ſubject; while their fluctuating ſituations produce a continual variation on objects, and throw them into ſuch different and contrary lights and poſitions *.

The more we converſe with mankind, and the greater ſocial intercourſe we maintain, the more ſhall we be familiarized to theſe general preferences and diſtinctions, without which our converſation and diſcourſe could ſcarcely be rendered intelligible to each other. Every man's intereſt is peculiar to himſelf, and the averſions and deſires, which reſult from it, cannot be ſuppoſed to affect others in a like degree. General language, therefore, being formed for general uſe, muſt be moulded on ſome more ge-

* See NOTE [L].

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neral views, and muſt affix the epithets of praiſe or blame, in conformity to ſentiments, which ariſe from the general intereſts of the community. And if theſe ſentiments, in moſt men, be not ſo ſtrong as thoſe, which have a reference to private good; yet ſtill they muſt make ſome diſtinction, even in perſons the moſt depraved and ſelfiſh; and muſt attach the notion of good to a beneficent conduct, and of evil to the contrary. Sympathy, we ſhall allow, is much fainter than our concern for ourſelves, and ſympathy with perſons remote from us, much fainter than that with perſons near and contiguous; but for this very reaſon, it is neceſſary for us, in our calm judgments and diſcourſe concerning the characters of men, to neglect all theſe differences, and render our ſentiments more public and ſocial. Beſides, that we ourſelves often change our ſituation in this particular, we every day meet with perſons, who are in a different ſituation from us, and who could never converſe with us, were we to remain conſtantly in that poſition and point of view, which is peculiar to ourſelf. The intercourſe of ſentiments, therefore, in ſociety and converſation, makes us form ſome general unalterable ſtandard, by which we may approve or diſapprove of characters and manners. And though the heart takes not part entirely with thoſe general notions, nor regulates all its love and hatred, by the univerſal, abſtract differences of vice and virtue, without regard to ſelf, or

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the perſons with whom we are more immediately connected; yet have theſe moral differences a conſiderable influence, and being ſufficient, at leaſt, for diſcourſe, ſerve all our purpoſes in company, in the the pulpit, on the theatre, and in the ſchools *.

Thus, in whatever light we take this ſubject, the merit, aſcribed to the ſocial virtues, appears ſtill uniform, and ariſes chiefly from that regard, which the natural ſentiment of benevolence engages us to pay to the intereſts of mankind and ſociety. If we conſider the principles of the human make, ſuch as they appear to daily experience and obſervation; we muſt, *à priori*, conclude it impoſſible for ſuch a creature as man to be totally indifferent to the well or ill-being of his fellow-creatures, and not readily, of himſelf, to pronounce, where nothing gives him any particular byaſs, that what promotes their happineſs is good, what tends to their miſery is evil, without any farther regard or conſideration. Here then are the faint rudiments, at leaſt, or out-lines, of a *general* diſtinction between actions; and in proportion as the humanity of the perſon is ſuppoſed to encreaſe, his connexion with thoſe injured or benefited, and his lively conception of their miſery or happineſs; his conſequent cenſure or approbation acquires proportionable vigour. There is no neceſſity, that a

* See NOTE [M].

generous

generous action, barely mentioned in an old hiſtory or remote gazette, ſhould communicate any ſtrong feelings of applauſe and admiration. Virtue, placed at ſuch a diſtance, is like a fixed ſtar, which, though to the eye of reaſon, it may appear as luminous as the ſun in his meridian, is ſo infinitely removed, as to affect the ſenſes, neither with light nor heat. Bring this virtue nearer, by our acquaintance or connexion with the perſons, or even by an eloquent recital of the caſe; our hearts are immediately caught, our ſympathy enlivened, and our cool approbation converted into the warmeſt ſentiments of friendſhip and regard. Theſe ſeem neceſſary and infallible conſequences of the general principles of human nature, as diſcovered in common life and practice.

Again; reverſe theſe views and reaſonings: Conſider the matter *à poſteriori*; and weighing the conſequences, enquire if the merit of ſocial virtue is not, in a great meaſure, derived from the feelings of humanity, with which it affects the ſpectators. It appears to be matter of fact, that the circumſtance of *utility*, in all ſubjects, is a ſource of praiſe and approbation: That it is conſtantly appealed to in all moral deciſions concerning the merit and demerit of actions: That it is the *ſole* ſource of that high regard paid to juſtice, fidelity, honour, allegiance, and chaſtity: That it is inſeparable from all the other ſocial virtues, humanity, generoſity,

generoſity, charity, affability, lenity, mercy, and moderation: And, in a word, that it is the foundation of the chief part of morals, which has a reference to mankind and our fellow-creatures.

It appears alſo, that, in our general approbation of characters and manners, the uſeful tendency of the ſocial virtues moves us not by any regards to ſelf-intereſt, but has an influence much more univerſal and extenſive. It appears, that a tendency to public good, and to the promoting of peace, harmony, and order in ſociety, does always, by affecting the benevolent principles of our frame, engage us on the ſide of the ſocial virtues. And it appears, as an additional confirmation, that theſe principles of humanity and ſympathy enter ſo deeply into all our ſentiments, and have ſo powerful an influence, as may enable them to excite the ſtrongeſt cenſure and applauſe. The preſent theory is the ſimple reſult of all theſe inferences, each of which ſeems founded on uniform experience and obſervation.

Were it doubtful, whether there were any ſuch principle in our nature as humanity or a concern for others, yet when we ſee, in numberleſs inſtances, that whatever has a tendency to promote the intereſts of ſociety, is ſo highly approved of, we ought thence to learn the force of the benevolent principle; ſince it is impoſſible for any thing to pleaſe

as means to an end, where the end is totally indifferent. On the other hand, were it doubtful, whether there were, implanted in our nature, any general principle of moral blame and approbation, yet when we ſee, in numberleſs inſtances, the influence of humanity, we ought thence to conclude, that it is impoſſible, but that every thing, which promotes the intereſt of ſociety, muſt communicate pleaſure, and what is pernicious give uneaſineſs. But when theſe different reflections and obſervations concur in eſtabliſhing the ſame concluſion, muſt they not beſtow an undiſputed evidence upon it?

It is however hoped, that the progreſs of this argument will bring a farther confirmation of the preſent theory, by ſhowing the riſe of other ſentiments of eſteem and regard from the ſame or like principles.

SECTION VI.

Of Qualities Useful to Ourselves.

PART I.

IT ſeems evident, that, where a quality or habit is ſubjected to our examination, if it appear, in any reſpect, prejudicial to the perſon poſſeſſed of it, or ſuch as incapacitates him for buſineſs and action, it is inſtantly blamed, and ranked among his faults and imperfections. Indolence, negligence, want of order and method, obſtinacy, fickleneſs, raſhneſs, credulity; theſe qualities were never eſteemed by any one indifferent to a character; much leſs, extolled as accompliſhments or virtues. The prejudice, reſulting from them, immediately ſtrikes our eye, and gives us the ſentiment of pain and diſapprobation.

No quality, it is allowed, is abſolutely either blameable or praiſe-worthy. It is all according to its degree. A due medium, ſay the Peripatetics, is the characteriſtic of virtue. But this medium is chiefly

chiefly determined by utility. A proper celerity, for instance, and dispatch in business, is commendable. When defective, no progress is ever made in the execution of any purpose: When excessive, it engages us in precipitate and ill-concerted measures and enterprizes: By such reasonings, we fix the proper and commendable mediocrity in all moral and prudential disquisitions; and never lose view of the advantages, which result from any character or habit.

Now as these advantages are enjoyed by the person possessed of the character, it can never be *self-love* which renders the prospect of them agreeable to us, the spectators, and prompts our esteem and approbation. No force of imagination can convert us into another person, and make us fancy, that we, being that person, reap benefit from those valuable qualities, which belong to him. Or if it did, no celerity of imagination could immediately transport us back, into ourselves, and make us love and esteem the person, as different from us. Views and sentiments, so opposite to known truth, and to each other, could never have place, at the same time, in the same person. All suspicion, therefore, of selfish regards, is here totally excluded. It is a quite different principle, which actuates our bosom, and interests us in the felicity of the person whom we contemplate. Where his natural talents and acquired

abilities give us the proſpect of elevation, advancement, a figure in life, proſperous ſucceſs, a ſteady command over fortune, and the execution of great or advantageous undertakings; we are ſtruck with ſuch agreeable images, and feel a complacency and regard immediately ariſe towards him. The ideas of happineſs, joy, triumph, proſperity, are connected with every circumſtance of his character, and diffuſe over our minds a pleaſing ſentiment of ſympathy and humanity *.

Let us ſuppoſe a perſon originally ſo framed as to have no manner of concern for his fellow-creatures, but to regard the happineſs and miſery of all ſenſible beings with greater indifference than even two contiguous ſhades of the ſame colour. Let us ſuppoſe, if the proſperity of nations were laid on the one hand, and their ruin on the other, and he were deſired to chooſe; that he would ſtand, like the ſchoolman's aſs, irreſolute and undetermined, between equal motives; or rather, like the ſame aſs between two pieces of wood or marble, without any inclination or propenſity to either ſide. The conſequence, I believe, muſt be allowed juſt, that ſuch a perſon, being abſolutely unconcerned, either for the public good of a community or the private utility of others, would look

* See NOTE [N].

on every quality, however pernicious, or however beneficial, to ſociety, or to its poſſeſſor, with the ſame indifference as on the moſt common and unintereſting object.

But if, inſtead of this fancied monſter, we ſuppoſe a *man* to form a judgment or determination in the caſe, there is to him a plain foundation of preference, where every thing elſe is equal; and however cool his choice may be, if his heart be ſelfiſh, or if the perſons intereſted be remote from him; there muſt ſtill be a choice or diſtinction between what is uſeful, and what is pernicious. Now this diſtinction is the ſame in all its parts, with the *moral diſtinction*, whoſe foundation has been ſo often, and ſo much in vain, enquired after. The ſame endowments of the mind, in every circumſtance, are agreeable to the ſentiment of morals and to that of humanity; the ſame temper is ſuſceptible of high degrees of the one ſentiment and of the other; and the ſame alteration in the objects, by their nearer approach or by connexions, enlivens the one and the other. By all the rules of philoſophy, therefore, we muſt conclude, that theſe ſentiments are originally the ſame; ſince, in each particular, even the moſt minute, they are governed by the ſame laws, and are moved by the ſame objects.

Why do philoſophers infer, with the greateſt certainty, that the moon is kept in its orbit by the ſame

force of gravity, which make bodies fall near the ſurface of the earth, but becauſe theſe effects are, upon computation, found ſimilar and equal? And muſt not this argument bring as ſtrong conviction, in moral as in natural diſquiſitions?

To prove, by any long detail, that all the qualities, uſeful to the poſſeſſor, are approved, and the contrary cenſured, would be ſuperfluous. The leaſt reflection on what is every day experienced in life, will be ſufficient. We ſhall only mention a few inſtances, in order to remove, if poſſible, all doubt and heſitation.

The quality, the moſt neceſſary for the execution of any uſeful enterprize, is DISCRETION; by which we carry on a ſafe intercourſe with others, give due attention to our own and to their character, weigh each circumſtance of the buſineſs which we undertake, and employ the ſureſt and ſafeſt means for the attainment of any end or purpoſe. To a CROMWEL, perhaps, or a DE RETZ, diſcretion may appear an alderman-like virtue, as Dr. SWIFT calls it; and being incompatible with thoſe vaſt deſigns, to which their courage and ambition prompted them, it might really, in them, be a fault or imperfection. But in the conduct of ordinary life, no virtue is more requiſite, not only to obtain ſucceſs, but to avoid the moſt fatal miſcarriages and diſappointments.

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The greateſt parts without it, as obſerved by an elegant writer, may be fatal to their owner; as POLYPHEMUS deprived of his eye was only the more expoſed, on account of his enormous ſtrength and ſtature.

The beſt character, indeed, were it not rather too perfect for human nature, is that which is not ſwayed by temper of any kind; but alternately employs enterpriſe and caution, as each is *uſeful* to the particular purpoſe intended. Such is the excellence which St. EVREMOND aſcribes to mareſchal TURENNE, who diſplayed every campaign, as he grew older, more temerity in his military enterpriſes; and being now, from long experience, perfectly acquainted with every incident in war, he advanced with greater firmneſs and ſecurity, in a road ſo well known to him. FABIUS, ſays MACHIAVEL, was cautious; SCIPIO enterpriſing: And both ſucceeded, becauſe the ſituation of the ROMAN affairs, during the command of each, was peculiarly adapted to his genius; but both would have failed, had theſe ſituations been reverſed. He is happy, whoſe circumſtances ſuit his temper; but he is more excellent, who can ſuit his temper to any circumſtances.

What need is there to diſplay the praiſes of INDUSTRY, and to extol its advantages, in the acquiſition of power and riches, or in raiſing what

we call a *fortune* in the world? The tortoiſe, according to the fable, by his aſſiduity, gained the race of the hare, though poſſeſſed of much ſuperior ſwiftneſs. A man's time, when well huſbanded, is like a cultivated field, of which a few acres produce more of what is uſeful to life, than extenſive provinces, even of the richeſt ſoil, when overrun with weeds and brambles.

But all proſpect of ſucceſs in life, or even of tolerable ſubſiſtence, muſt fail, where a reaſonable FRUGALITY is wanting. The heap, inſtead of increaſing, diminiſhes daily, and leaves its poſſeſſor ſo much more unhappy, that, not having been able to confine his expences to a large revenue, he will ſtill leſs be able to live contentedly on a ſmall one. The ſouls of men, according to PLATO †, inflamed with impure appetites, and loſing the body, which alone afforded means of ſatisfaction, hover about the earth, and haunt the places, where their bodies are depoſited; poſſeſt with a longing deſire to recover the loſt organs of ſenſation. So may we ſee worthleſs prodigals, having conſumed their fortune in wild debauches, thruſting themſelves into every plentiful table, and every party of pleaſure, hated even by the vicious, and deſpiſed even by fools.

† Phædo.

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The one extreme of frugality is *avarice*, which, as it both deprives a man of all uſe of his riches, and checks hoſpitality and every ſocial enjoyment, is juſtly cenſured on a double account. *Prodigality*, the other extreme, is commonly more hurtful to a man himſelf; and each of theſe extremes is blamed above the other, according to the temper of the perſon who cenſures, and according to his greater or leſs ſenſibility to pleaſure, either ſocial or ſenſual.

Qualities often derive their merit from complicated ſources. *Honeſty*, *fidelity*, *truth*, are praiſed for their immediate tendency to promote the intereſts of ſociety; but they are alſo conſidered as advantageous to the perſon himſelf, and as the ſource of that truſt and confidence, which can alone give a man any conſideration in life. One becomes contemptible, no leſs than odious, when he forgets the duty, which, in this particular, he owes to himſelf as well as to ſociety.

Perhaps, this conſideration is one *chief* ſource of the high blame, which is thrown on any inſtance of failure among women in point of *chaſtity*. The greateſt regard, which can be acquired by that ſex, is derived from their fidelity; and a woman becomes cheap and vulgar, loſes her rank, and is expoſed to every inſult, who is deficient in this particular. The ſmalleſt failure is here ſufficient to blaſt her

character. A female has ſo many opportunities of ſecretly indulging theſe appetites, that nothing can give us ſecurity but her abſolute modeſty and reſerve; and where a breach is once made it can ſcarcely ever be fully repaired. If a man behaves with cowardice on one occaſion, a contrary conduct reinſtates him in his character. But by what action can a woman, whoſe behaviour has once been diſſolute, be able to aſſure us, that ſhe has formed better reſolutions, and has ſelf-command enough to carry them into execution?

All men, it is allowed, are equally deſirous of happineſs; but few are ſucceſsful in the purſuit: One chief cauſe is the want of STRENGTH of MIND, which might enable them to reſiſt the temptation of preſent eaſe or pleaſure, and carry them forward in the ſearch of more diſtant profit and enjoyment. Our affections, on a general proſpect of their objects, form certain rules of conduct, and certain meaſures of preference of one above another: And theſe deciſions, though really the reſult of our calm paſſions, and propenſities, (for what elſe can pronounce any object eligible or the contrary?) are yet ſaid, by a natural abuſe of terms, to be the determinations of pure *reaſon* and reflection. But when ſome of theſe objects approach nearer us, or acquire the advantages of favourable lights and poſitions, which catch the heart or imagination; our general

general resolutions are frequently confounded, a small enjoyment preferred, and lasting shame and sorrow entailed upon us. And however poets may employ their wit and eloquence, in celebrating present pleasure, and rejecting all distant views to fame, health, or fortune; it is obvious, that this practice is the source of all dissoluteness and disorder, repentance and misery. A man of a strong and determined temper adheres tenaciously to his general resolutions, and is neither seduced by the allurements of pleasure, nor terrified by the menaces of pain; but keeps still in view those distant pursuits, by which he, at once, ensures his happiness and his honour.

Self-satisfaction, at least in some degree, is an advantage, which equally attends the FOOL and the WISE MAN: But it is the only one; nor is there any other circumstance in the conduct of life, where they are upon an equal footing. Business, books, conversation; for all of these, a fool is totally incapacitated, and except condemned by his station to the coarsest drudgery, remains a *useless* burthen upon the earth. Accordingly, it is found, that men are extremely jealous of their character in this particular; and many instances are seen of profligacy and treachery, the most avowed and unreserved; none of bearing patiently the imputation of ignorance

rance and ſtupidity. DICAEARCHUS, the MACEDONIAN general, who, as POLYBIUS tells us *, openly erected one altar to impiety, another to injuſtice, in order to bid defiance to mankind; even he, I am well aſſured, would have ſtarted at the epithet of *fool*, and have meditated revenge for ſo injurious an appellation. Except the affection of parents, the ſtrongeſt and moſt indiſſoluble bond in nature, no connexion has ſtrength ſufficient to ſupport the diſguſt ariſing from this character. Love itſelf, which can ſubſiſt under treachery, ingratitude, malice, and infidelity, is immediately extinguiſhed by it, when perceived and acknowledged; nor are deformity and old age more fatal to the dominion of that paſſion. So dreadful are the ideas of an utter incapacity for any purpoſe or undertaking, and of continued error and miſconduct in life!

When it is aſked, whether a quick or a ſlow apprehenſion be moſt valuable? Whether one, that, at firſt view, penetrates far into a ſubject, but can perform nothing upon ſtudy; or a contrary character, which muſt work out every thing by dint of application? Whether a clear head or a copious invention? Whether a profound genius or a ſure judgment? In ſhort, what character, or peculiar turn of underſtanding is more excellent than ano-

* Lib. xvii, cap. 35.

ther?

ther? It is evident, that we can answer none of these questions, without considering which of those qualities capacitates a man best for the world, and carries him fartheſt in any undertaking.

If refined ſenſe and exalted ſenſe be not ſo *uſeful* as common ſenſe, their rarity, their novelty, and the nobleneſs of their objects make ſome compenſation, and render them the admiration of mankind: As gold, though leſs ſerviceable than iron, acquires, from its ſcarcity, a value, which is much ſuperior.

The defects of judgment can be ſupplied by no art or invention; but thoſe of MEMORY frequently may, both in buſineſs and in ſtudy, by method and induſtry, and by diligence in committing every thing to writing; and we ſcarcely ever hear a ſhort memory given as a reaſon for a man's want of ſucceſs in any undertaking. But in ancient times, when no man could make a figure without the talent of ſpeaking, and when the audience were too delicate to bear ſuch crude, undigeſted harangues as our extemporary orators offer to public aſſemblies; the faculty of memory was then of the utmoſt conſequence, and was accordingly much more valued than at preſent. Scarce any great genius is mentioned in antiquity, who is not celebrated for this

this talent; and CICERO enumerates it among the other ſublime qualities of CÆSAR himſelf *.

Particular cuſtoms and manners alter the uſefulneſs of qualities: They alſo alter their merit. Particular ſituations and accidents have, in ſome degree, the ſame influence. He will always be more eſteemed, who poſſeſſes thoſe talents and accompliſhments, which ſuit his ſtation and profeſſion, than he whom fortune has miſplaced in the part which ſhe has aſſigned him. The private or ſelfiſh virtues are, in this reſpect, more arbitrary than the public and ſocial. In other reſpects, they are, perhaps, leſs liable to doubt and controverſy.

In this kingdom, ſuch continued oſtentation, of late years, has prevailed among men in *active* life with regard to *public ſpirit*, and among thoſe in *ſpeculative* with regard to *benevolence*; and ſo many falſe pretenſions to each have been, no doubt, detected, that men of the world are apt, without any bad intention, to diſcover a ſullen incredulity on the head of thoſe moral endowments, and even ſometimes abſolutely to deny their exiſtence and reality. In like manner, I find, that, of old, the perpetual cant of the *Stoics* and *Cynics* concerning *virtue*, their

* Fuit in illo ingenium, ratio, memoria, literæ, cura, cogitatio, diligentia, &c. PHILIP. 2.

magnificent

magnificent profeſſions and ſlender performances, bred a diſguſt in mankind; and LUCIAN, who, though licentious with regard to pleaſure, is yet, in other reſpects, a very moral writer, cannot, ſometimes, talk of virtue, ſo much boaſted, without betraying ſymptoms of ſpleen and irony *. But ſurely this peeviſh delicacy, whence-ever it ariſes, can never be carried ſo far as to make us deny the exiſtence of every ſpecies of merit, and all diſtinction of manners and behaviour. Beſides *diſcretion, caution, enterpriſe, induſtry, aſſiduity, frugality, œconomy, good-ſenſe, prudence, diſcernment*; beſides theſe endowments, I ſay, whoſe very names force an avowal of their merit, there are many others, to which the moſt determined ſcepticiſm cannot, for a moment, refuſe the tribute of praiſe and approbation. *Temperance, ſobriety, patience, conſtancy, perſeverance, forethought, conſiderateneſs, ſecrecy, order, inſinuation, addreſs, preſence of mind, quickneſs of conception, facility of expreſſion*; theſe, and a thouſand more of the ſame kind, no man will ever deny to be excellencies and perfections. As their merit conſiſts in their tendency to ſerve the perſon, poſſeſſed

* Αρετην τινα και ασωματα και ληρους μηγαλη τη φωνη ξυνειροντων. LUC. TIMON. Again, Και συναγαγοντες (οι φιλοσοφοι) ευεξαπατητα μειρακια τηντε πολυθρυλλητον αρετην τραγωδουσι. ICURO-MEN. In another place, Ηπου γαρ εςιν η πολυθρυλλητος αρετη, ϗ φυσις, ϗ ειμαρμενη, ϗ τυχη, ανυπος ατα ϗ κενα πραγματων ονοματα. Deor. Concil.

of

of them, without any magnificent claims of public and ſocial deſert, we are the leſs jealous of their pretenſions, and readily admit them into the catalogue of laudable qualities. We are not ſenſible, that, by this conceſſion, we have paved the way for all the other moral excellencies, and cannot conſiſtently heſitate any longer, with regard to diſintereſted benevolence, patriotiſm, and humanity.

It ſeems, indeed, certain, that firſt appearances are here, as uſual, extremely deceitful, and that it is more difficult, in a ſpeculative way, to reſolve into ſelf-love the merit, which we aſcribe to the ſelfiſh virtues above mentioned, than that even of the ſocial virtues, juſtice and beneficence. For this latter purpoſe, we need but ſay, that whatever conduct promotes the good of the community is loved, praiſed, and eſteemed by the community, on account of that utility and intereſt, of which every one partakes: and tho' this affection and regard be, in reality, gratitude, not ſelf-love, yet a diſtinction, even of this obvious nature, may not readily be made by ſuperficial reaſoners; and there is room, at leaſt, to ſupport the cavil and diſpute for a moment. But as qualities, which tend only to the utility of their poſſeſſor, without any reference to us, or to the community, are yet eſteemed and valued; by what theory or ſyſtem can we account for this ſentiment from ſelf-love, or deduce it from that favourite origin?

origin? There ſeems here a neceſſity of confeſſing that the happineſs and miſery of others are not ſpectacles entirely indifferent to us; but that the view of the former, whether in its cauſes or effects, like ſun-ſhine or the proſpect of well-cultivated plains, (to carry our pretenſions no higher) communicates a ſecret joy and ſatisfaction; the appearance of the latter, like a lowering cloud or barren landſkip, throws a melancholy damp over the imagination. And this conceſſion being once made, the difficulty is over; and a natural unforced interpretation of the phænomena of human life will afterwards, we may hope, prevail among all ſpeculative enquirers.

PART II.

It may not be improper, in this place, to examine the influence of bodily endowments, and of the goods of fortune, over our ſentiments of regard and eſteem, and to conſider whether theſe phænomena fortify or weaken the preſent theory. It will naturally be expected, that the beauty of the body, as is ſuppoſed by all ancient moraliſts, will be ſimilar, in ſome reſpects, to that of the mind; and that every kind of eſteem, which is paid to a man, will have ſomething ſimilar in its origin, whether it ariſes from his mental endowments, or from the ſituation of his exterior circumſtances.

It is evident, that one conſiderable ſource of *beauty* in all animals is the advantage, which they reap from the particular ſtructure of their limbs and members, ſuitably to the particular manner of life, to which they are by nature deſtined. The juſt proportions of a horſe, deſcribed by XENOPHON and VIRGIL, are the ſame, which are received at this day by our modern jockeys; becauſe the foundation of them is the ſame, namely, experience of what is detrimental or uſeful in the animal.

Broad ſhoulders, a lank belly, firm joints, taper legs; all theſe are beautiful in our ſpecies, becauſe ſigns of force and vigour. Ideas of utility and its contrary, though they do not entirely determine what is handſome or deformed, are evidently the ſource of a conſiderable part of approbation or diſlike.

In ancient times, bodily ſtrength and dexterity, being of greater *uſe* and importance in war, was alſo much more eſteemed and valued, than at preſent. Not to inſiſt on HOMER and the poets, we may obſerve, that hiſtorians ſcruple not to mention *force of body* among the other accompliſhments even of EPAMINONDAS, whom they acknowledge to be the greateſt hero, ſtateſman, and general of all the GREEKS *. A like praiſe is given to POMPEY,

* See NOTE [O].

one

one of the greateſt of the ROMANS †. This inſtance is ſimilar to what we obſerved above, with regard to memory.

What deriſion and contempt, with both ſexes, attend *impotence*; while the unhappy object is regarded as one deprived of ſo capital a pleaſure in life, and at the ſame time, as diſabled from communicating it to others. *Barrenneſs* in women, being alſo a ſpecies of *inutility*, is a reproach, but not in the ſame degree: Of which the reaſon is very obvious, according to the preſent theory.

There is no rule in painting or ſtatuary more indiſpenſible than that of balancing the figures, and placing them with the greateſt exactneſs on their proper center of gravity. A figure, which is not juſtly balanced, is ugly; becauſe it conveys the diſagreeable ideas of fall, harm, and pain *.

A diſpoſition or turn of mind, which qualifies a man to riſe in the world, and advance his fortune, is entitled to eſteem and regard, as has been already explained. It may, therefore, naturally be ſup-

† *Cum alacribus, ſaltu; cum velocibus, curſu; cum validis recte certabat.* SALLUST apud VEGET.

* See NOTE [P].

poſed, that the actual poſſeſſion of riches and authority will have a conſiderable influence over theſe ſentiments.

Let us examine any hypotheſis, by which we can account for the regard paid to the rich and powerful: We ſhall find none ſatisfactory, but that which derives it from the enjoyment communicated to the ſpectator by the images of proſperity, happineſs, eaſe, plenty, command, and the gratification of every appetite. Self-love, for inſtance, which ſome affect ſo much to conſider as the ſource of every ſentiment, is plainly inſufficient to this purpoſe. Where no good-will or friendſhip appears, it is difficult to conceive on what we can found our hope of advantage from the riches of others; though we naturally reſpect the rich, even before they diſcover any ſuch favourable diſpoſition towards us.

We are affected with the ſame ſentiments, when we lie ſo much out of the ſphere of their activity, that they cannot even be ſuppoſed to poſſeſs the power of ſerving us. A priſoner of war, in all civilized nations, is treated with a regard ſuited to his condition; and riches, it is evident, go far towards fixing the condition of any perſon. If birth and quality enter for a ſhare, this ſtill affords us an argument to our preſent purpoſe. For what is it we call a man of birth, but one who is deſcended from a long

a long ſucceſſion of rich and powerful anceſtors, and who acquires our eſteem by his connexion with perſons whom we eſteem? His anceſtors, therefore, though dead, are reſpected, in ſome meaſure, on account of their riches; and conſequently, without any kind of expectation.

But not to go ſo far as priſoners of war or the dead, to find inſtances of this diſintereſted regard for riches; we may only obſerve, with a little attention, thoſe phænomena, which occur in common life and converſation. A man, who is himſelf, we ſhall ſuppoſe, of a competent fortune, and of no profeſſion, being introduced to a company of ſtrangers, naturally treats them with different degrees of reſpect, as he is informed of their different fortunes and conditions; though it is impoſſible that he can ſo ſuddenly propoſe, and perhaps he would not accept of, any pecuniary advantage from them. A traveller is always admitted into company, and meets with civility, in proportion as his train and equipage ſpeak him a man of great or moderate fortune. In ſhort, the different ranks of men are, in a great meaſure, regulated by riches; and that with regard to ſuperiors as well as inferiors, ſtrangers as well as acquaintance.

What remains, therefore, but to conclude, that, as riches are deſired for ourſelf only as the means of

gratifying our appetites, either at preſent or in ſome imaginary future period; they beget eſteem in others merely from their having that influence. This indeed is their very nature or eſſence: They have a direct reference to the commodities, conveniencies, and pleaſures of life: The bill of a banker, who is broke, or gold in a deſart iſland, would otherwiſe be full as valuable. When we approach a man, who is, as we ſay, at his eaſe, we are preſented with the pleaſing ideas of plenty, ſatisfaction, cleanlineſs, warmth; a chearful houſe, elegant furniture, ready ſervice, and whatever is deſirable in meat, drink, or apparel. On the contrary, when a poor man appears, the diſagreeable images of want, penury, hard labour, dirty furniture, coarſe or ragged cloaths, nauſeous meat and diſtaſteful liquor, immediately ſtrike our fancy. What elſe do we mean by ſaying that one is rich, the other poor? And as regard or contempt is the natural conſequence of thoſe different ſituations in life; it is eaſily ſeen what additional light and evidence this throws on our preceding theory, with regard to all moral diſtinctions *.

A man, who has cured himſelf of all ridiculous prepoſſeſſions, and is fully, ſincerely, and ſteadily

* See NOTE [Q].

convinced, from experience as well as philoſophy, that the differences of fortune make leſs difference in happineſs than is vulgarly imagined; ſuch a one does not meaſure out degrees of eſteem according to the rent-rolls of his acquaintance. He may, indeed, externally pay a ſuperior deference to the great lord above the vaſſal; becauſe riches are the moſt convenient, being the moſt fixed and determinate, ſource of diſtinction: But his internal ſentiments are more regulated by the perſonal characters of men, than by the accidental and capricious favours of fortune.

In moſt countries of Europe, family, that is, hereditary riches, marked with titles and ſymbols from the ſovereign, is the chief ſource of diſtinction. In England, more regard is paid to preſent opulence and plenty. Each practice has its advantages and diſadvantages. Where birth is reſpected, unactive, ſpiritleſs minds remain in haughty indolence, and dream of nothing but pedigrees and genealogies: The generous and ambitious ſeek honour and command and reputation and favour. Where riches are the chief idol, corruption, venality, rapine prevail: Arts, manufactures, commerce, agriculture flouriſh. The former prejudice, being favourable to military virtue, is more ſuited to monarchies. The latter, being the chief ſpur to in-

duſtry, agrees better with a republican government. And we accordingly find, that each of theſe forms of government, by varying the *utility* of thoſe cuſtoms, has commonly a proportional effect on the ſentiments of mankind.

SECTION VII.

Of QUALITIES IMMEDIATELY AGREEABLE to OURSELVES.

WHOEVER has paſſed an evening with ſerious melancholy people, and has obſerved how ſuddenly the converſation was animated, and what ſprightlineſs diffuſed itſelf over the countenance, diſcourſe, and behaviour of every one, on the acceſſion of a good-humoured, lively companion; ſuch a one will eaſily allow, that CHEARFULNESS carries great merit with it, and naturally conciliates the good-will of mankind. No quality, indeed, more readily communicates itſelf to all around; becauſe no one has a greater propenſity to diſplay itſelf, in jovial talk and pleaſant entertainment. The flame ſpreads through the whole circle; and the moſt ſullen and moroſe are often caught by it. That the melancholy hate the merry, even though HORACE ſays it, I have ſome difficulty to allow; becauſe I have always obſerved, that, where the jollity is moderate and decent, ſerious

people are ſo much the more delighted, as it diſſipates the gloom, with which they are commonly oppreſſed; and gives them an unuſual enjoyment.

From this influence of chearfulneſs, both to communicate itſelf, and to engage approbation, we may perceive, that there is another ſet of mental qualities, which, without any utility or any tendency to farther good, either of the community or of the poſſeſſor, diffuſe a ſatisfaction on the beholders, and procure friendſhip and regard. Their immediate ſenſation, to the perſon poſſeſſed of them, is agreeable: Others enter into the ſame humour, and catch the ſentiment, by a contagion or natural ſympathy: And as we cannot forbear loving whatever pleaſes, a kindly emotion ariſes towards the perſon, who communicates ſo much ſatisfaction. He is a more animating ſpectacle: His preſence diffuſes over us more ſerene complacency and enjoyment: Our imagination, entering into his feelings and diſpoſition, is affected in a more agreeable manner, than if a melancholy, dejected, ſullen, anxious temper, were preſented to us. Hence the affection and approbation, which attend the former: The averſion and diſguſt, with which we regard the latter *.

* See NOTE [R].

Few

Few men would envy the character, which CÆSAR gives of CASSIUS.

> He loves no play,
> As thou do'ſt, ANTHONY: He hears no muſic:
> Seldom he ſmiles; and ſmiles in ſuch a ſort,
> As if he mock'd himſelf, and ſcorn'd his ſpirit
> That could be mov'd to ſmile at any thing.

Not only ſuch men, as CÆSAR adds, are commonly *dangerous*, but alſo, having little enjoyment within themſelves, they can never become agreeable to others, or contribute any thing to ſocial entertainment. In all polite nations and ages, a reliſh of pleaſure, if accompanied with temperance and decency, is eſteemed a conſiderable merit, even in the greateſt men; and becomes ſtill more requiſite in thoſe of inferior rank and character. It is an agreeable repreſentation, which a FRENCH writer gives of the ſituation of his own mind in this particular, *Virtue I love*, ſays he, *without auſterity: Pleaſure without effeminacy: And life, without fearing its end* *.

Who is not ſtruck with any ſignal inſtances of GREATNESS of MIND or Dignity of Cha-

* "J'aime la vertu, ſans rudeſſe;
"J'aime la plaiſir, ſans moleſſe;
"J'aime la vie, & n'en crains point la fin."
ST. EVREMOND.

racter;

racter; with elevation of ſentiments, diſdain of ſlavery, and with that noble pride and ſpirit, which ariſes from conſcious virtue? The ſublime, ſays LONGINUS, is often nothing but the echo or image of magnanimity; and where this quality appears in any one, even though a ſyllable be not uttered, it excites our applauſe and admiration; as may be obſerved of the famous ſilence of AJAX in the ODYSSEY, which expreſſes more noble diſdain and reſolute indignation, than any language can convey †.

Were I ALEXANDER, ſaid PARMENIO, *I would accept of theſe offers made by* DARIUS. *So would I too,* replied ALEXANDER, *were I* PARMENIO. This ſaying is admirable, ſays LONGINUS, from a like principle ‡.

Go! cries the ſame hero to his ſoldiers, when they refuſed to follow him to the INDIES, *go tell your countrymen, that you left* ALEXANDER *compleating the conqueſt of the world.* "ALEXANDER," ſaid the Prince of CONDE', who always admired this paſſage, "abandoned by his ſoldiers, among Barbarians, not "yet fully ſubdued, felt in himſelf ſuch a dignity "and right of empire, that he could not believe it "poſſible, that any one would refuſe to obey him. "Whether in EUROPE or in ASIA, among GREEKS

† Cap. 9. ‡ Idem.

"or

"or PERSIANS, all was indifferent to him: Where-
"ever he found men, he fancied he would find
"ſubjects."

The confidant of MEDEA in the tragedy recommends caution and ſubmiſſion; and enumerating all the diſtreſſes of that unfortunate heroine, aſks her, what ſhe has to ſupport her againſt her numerous and implacable enemies. *Myſelf*, replies ſhe; *Myſelf, I ſay, and it is enough.* BOILEAU juſtly recommends this paſſage as an inſtance of true ſublime *.

When PHOCION, the modeſt, the gentle PHOCION, was led to execution, he turned to one of his fellow-ſufferers who was lamenting his own hard fate. *Is it not glory enough for you,* ſays he, *that you die with* PHOCION †?

Place in oppoſition the picture, which TACITUS draws of VITELLIUS, fallen from empire, prolonging his ignominy from a wretched love of life, delivered over to the mercileſs rabble; toſſed, buffeted, and kicked about; conſtrained, by their holding a ponyard under his chin, to raiſe his head, and expoſe himſelf to every contumely. What abject infamy! What low humiliation! Yet even here,

* Reflexion 10 ſur Longin. † PLUTARCH in PHOC.

ſays

ſays the hiſtorian, he diſcovered ſome ſymptoms of a mind not wholly degenerate. To a tribune, who inſulted him, he replied, *I am ſtill your emperor* *.

We never excuſe the abſolute want of ſpirit and dignity of character, or a proper ſenſe of what is due to one's ſelf, in ſociety and the common intercourſe of life. This vice conſtitutes what we properly call *meanneſs*; when a man can ſubmit to the baſeſt ſlavery, in order to gain his ends; fawn upon thoſe who abuſe him; and degrade himſelf by intimacies and familiarities with undeſerving inferiors. A certain degree of generous pride or ſelf-value is ſo requiſite, that the abſence of it in the mind diſpleaſes, after the ſame manner as the want of a noſe, eye, or any of the moſt material features of the face or members of the body †.

The utility of COURAGE, both to the public and to the perſon poſſeſſed of it, is an obvious foundation of merit: But to any one who duly conſiders the matter, it will appear, that this quality has a peculiar luſtre, which it derives wholly from itſelf, and from that noble elevation inſeparable from it. Its figure, drawn by painters and by poets, diſplays,

* See NOTE [S].

† See NOTE [T].

in

in each feature, a ſublimity and daring confidence; which catches the eye, engages the affections, and diffuſes, by ſympathy, a like ſublimity of ſentiment over every ſpectator.

Under what ſhining colours does DEMOSTHENES † repreſent PHILIP; where the orator apologizes for his own adminiſtration, and juſtifies that pertinacious love of liberty, with which he had inſpired the ATHENIANS. "I beheld PHILIP," ſays he, "he "with whom was your conteſt, reſolutely, while in "purſuit of empire and dominion, expoſing himſelf "to every wound; his eye goared, his neck wreſted, "his arm, his thigh pierced, whatever part of his "body fortune ſhould ſeize on, that cheerfully re- "linquiſhing; provided that, with what remained, "he might live in honour and renown. And ſhall "it be ſaid, that he, born in PELLA, a place "heretofore mean and ignoble, ſhould be inſpired "with ſo high an ambition and thirſt of fame: "While you, ATHENIANS, *&c.*" Theſe praiſes excite the moſt lively admiration; but the views preſented by the orator, carry us not, we ſee, beyond the hero himſelf, nor ever regard the future advantageous conſequences of his valour.

The martial temper of the ROMANS, inflamed by continual wars, had raiſed their eſteem of courage

† Pro corona.

ſo

ſo high, that, in their language, it was called *virtus*, by way of excellence and of diſtinction from all other moral qualities. *The* SUEVI, in the opinion of TACITUS †, *dreſt their hair with a laudable intent: Not for the purpoſes of loving or being beloved: They adorned themſelves only for their enemies, and in order to appear more terrible.* A ſentiment of the hiſtorian, which would ſound a little oddly in other nations and other ages.

The SCYTHIANS, according to HERODOTUS ‡, after ſcalping their enemies, dreſſed the ſkin like leather, and uſed it as a towel; and whoever had the moſt of thoſe towels was moſt eſteemed among them. So much had martial bravery, in that nation, as well as in many others, deſtroyed the ſentiments of humanity; a virtue ſurely much more uſeful and engaging.

It is indeed obſervable, that, among all uncultivated nations, who have not, as yet, had full experience of the advantages attending beneficence, juſtice, and the ſocial virtues, courage is the predominant excellence; what is moſt celebrated by poets, recommended by parents and inſtructors, and admired by the public in general. The ethics of HOMER are, in this particular, very different

† De moribus Germ. ‡ Lib. iv.

from

from thoſe of FENELON, his elegant imitator; and ſuch as were well ſuited to an age, in which one hero, as remarked by THUCYDIDES *, could aſk another, without offence, whether or not he was a robber. Such alſo, very lately, was the ſyſtem of ethics, which prevailed in many barbarous parts of IRELAND; if we may credit SPENCER, in his judicious account of the ſtate of that kingdom †.

Of the ſame claſs of virtues with courage is that undiſturbed philoſophical TRANQUILLITY, ſuperior to pain, ſorrow, anxiety, and each aſſault of adverſe fortune. Conſcious of his own virtue, ſay the philoſophers, the ſage elevates himſelf above every accident of life; and ſecurely placed in the temple of wiſdom, looks down on inferior mortals, engaged in purſuit of honours, riches, reputation, and every frivolous enjoyment. Theſe pretenſions, no doubt, when ſtretched to the utmoſt, are, by far, too magnificent for human nature. They carry, however, a grandeur with them, which ſeizes the ſpectator, and ſtrikes him with admiration. And

* Lib. i.

† It is a common uſe, ſays he, amongſt their gentlemen's ſons, that, as ſoon as they are able to uſe their weapons, they ſtrait gather to themſelves three or four ſtragglers or kern, with whom wandering a while up and down idly the country, taking only meat, he at laſt falleth into ſome bad occaſion, that ſhall be offered; which being once made known, he is thenceforth counted a man of worth, in whom there is courage.

the

the nearer we can approach in practice, to this ſublime tranquillity and indifference (for we muſt diſtinguiſh it from a ſtupid inſenſibility) the more ſecure enjoyment ſhall we attain within ourſelves, and the more greatneſs of mind ſhall we diſcover to the world. The philoſophical tranquillity may, indeed, be conſidered only as a branch of magnanimity.

Who admires not SOCRATES; his perpetual ſerenity and contentment, amidſt the greateſt poverty and domeſtic vexations; his reſolute contempt of riches, and magnanimous care of preſerving liberty, while he refuſed all aſſiſtance from his friends and diſciples, and avoided even the dependence of an obligation? EPICTETUS had not ſo much as a door to his little houſe or hovel; and therefore, ſoon loſt his iron lamp, the only furniture which he had worth taking. But reſolving to diſappoint all robbers for the future, he ſupplied its place with an earthen lamp, of which he very peaceably kept poſſeſſion ever after.

In antiquity, the heroes of philoſophy, as well as thoſe of war and patriotiſm, have a grandeur and force of ſentiment, which aſtoniſhes our narrow ſouls, and is raſhly rejected as extravagant and ſupernatural. They, in their turn, I allow, would have had equal reaſon to conſider as romantic and incredible,

dible, the degree of humanity, clemency, order, tranquillity, and other ſocial virtues, to which, in the adminiſtration of government, we have attained in modern times, had any one been then able to have made a fair repreſentation of them. Such is the compenſation, which nature, or rather education, has made in the diſtribution of excellencies and virtues, in theſe different ages.

The merit of BENEVOLENCE, ariſing from its utility, and its tendency to promote the good of mankind, has been already explained, and is, no doubt, the ſource of a *conſiderable* part of that eſteem, which is ſo univerſally paid to it. But it will alſo be allowed, that the very ſoftneſs and tenderneſs of the ſentiment, its engaging endearments, its fond expreſſions, its delicate attentions, and all that flow of mutual confidence and regard, which enter into a warm attachment of love and friendſhip: It will be allowed, I ſay, that theſe feelings, being delightful in themſelves, are neceſſarily communicated to the ſpectators, and melt them into the ſame fondneſs and delicacy. The tears naturally ſtart in our eyes on the apprehenſion of a warm ſentiment of this nature: Our breaſt heaves, our heart is agitated, and every humane tender principle of our frame is ſet in motion, and gives us the pureſt and moſt ſatisfactory enjoyment.

When poets form deſcriptions of ELYSIAN fields, where the bleſſed inhabitants ſtand in no need of each other's aſſiſtance, they yet repreſent them as maintaining a conſtant intercourſe of love and friendſhip, and ſooth our fancy with the pleaſing image of theſe ſoft and gentle paſſions. The idea of tender tranquillity in a paſtoral ARCADIA is agreeable from a like principle, as has been obſerved above *.

Who would live amidſt perpetual wrangling, and ſcolding, and mutual reproaches? The roughneſs and harſhneſs of theſe emotions diſturb and diſpleaſe us: We ſuffer by contagion and ſympathy; nor can we remain indifferent ſpectators, even though certain, that no pernicious conſequences would ever follow from ſuch angry paſſions.

As a certain proof, that the whole merit of benevolence is not derived from its uſefulneſs, we may obſerve, that, in a kind way of blame, we ſay, a perſon is *too good*; when he exceeds his part in ſociety, and carries his attention for others beyond the proper bounds. In like manner, we ſay a man is *too high ſpirited, too intrepid, too indifferent about fortune:* Reproaches, which really, at bottom, imply more eſteem than many panegyrics. Being accuſtomed to rate the merit and demerit of characters

* Sect. 5. Part 2.

chiefly

chiefly by their uſeful or pernicious tendencies, we cannot forbear applying the epithet of blame, when we diſcover a ſentiment, which riſes to a degree that is hurtful: But it may happen, at the ſame time, that its noble elevation, or its engaging tenderneſs ſo ſeizes the heart, as rather to encreaſe our friendſhip and concern for the perſon †.

The amours and attachments of HARRY the IVth of FRANCE, during the civil wars of the league, frequently hurt his intereſt and his cauſe; but all the young, at leaſt, and amorous, who can ſympathize with the tender paſſions, will allow, that this very weakneſs (for they will readily call it ſuch) chiefly endears that hero, and intereſts them in his fortunes.

The exceſſive bravery and reſolute inflexibility of CHARLES the XIIth ruined his own country, and infeſted all his neighbours: But have ſuch ſplendor and greatneſs in their appearance, as ſtrikes us with admiration; and they might, in ſome degree, be even approved of, if they betrayed not ſometimes too evident ſymptoms of madneſs and diſorder.

The ATHENIANS pretended to the firſt invention of agriculture and of laws; and always valued

† Cheerfulneſs could ſcarce admit of blame from its exceſs, were it not that diſſolute mirth, without a proper cauſe or ſubject, is a ſure ſymptom and characteriſtic of folly, and on that account diſguſtful.

themſelves extremely on the benefit thereby procured to the whole race of mankind. They alſo boaſted, and with reaſon, of their warlike enterprizes; particularly againſt thoſe innumerable fleets and armies of PERSIANS, which invaded GREECE during the reigns of DARIUS and XERXES. But though there be no compariſon, in point of utility, between theſe peaceful and military honours; yet we find, that the orators, who have writ ſuch elaborate panegyrics on that famous city, have chiefly triumphed in diſplaying the warlike atchievements. LYCIAS, THUCYDIDES, PLATO, and ISOCRATES diſcover, all of them, the ſame partiality; which, though condemned by calm reaſon and reflection, appears ſo natural in the mind of man.

It is obſervable, that the great charm of poetry conſiſts in lively pictures of the ſublime paſſions, magnanimity, courage, diſdain of fortune; or thoſe of the tender affections, love and friendſhip; which warm the heart, and diffuſe over it ſimilar ſentiments and emotions. And though all kinds of paſſion, even the moſt diſagreeable, ſuch as grief and anger, are obſerved, when excited by poetry, to convey a ſatisfaction, from a mechaniſm of nature, not eaſy to be explained: Yet thoſe more elevated or ſofter affections have a peculiar influence, and pleaſe from more than one cauſe or principle. Not to mention, that they alone intereſt us in the for-

tune

tune of the perſons repreſented, or communicate any eſteem and affection for their character.

And can it poſſibly be doubted, that this talent itſelf of poets, to move the paſſions, this PATHETIC and SUBLIME of ſentiment, is a very conſiderable merit; and being enhanced by its extreme rarity, may exalt the perſon poſſeſſed of it, above every character of the age in which he lives? The prudence, addreſs, ſteadineſs, and benign government of AUGUSTUS, adorned with all the ſplendor of his noble birth and imperial crown, render him but an unequal competitor for fame with VIRGIL, who lays nothing into the oppoſite ſcale but the divine beauties of his poetical genius.

The very ſenſibility to theſe beauties or a DELICACY of taſte, is itſelf a beauty in any character; as conveying the pureſt, the moſt durable, and moſt innocent of all enjoyments.

Theſe are ſome inſtances of the ſpecies of merit, that are valued for the immediate pleaſure, which they communicate to the perſon poſſeſſed of them. No views of utility or of future beneficial conſequences enter into this ſentiment of approbation; yet is it of a kind ſimilar to that other ſentiment, which ariſes from views of a public or private utility.

The ſame ſocial ſympathy, we may obſerve, or fellow-feeling with human happineſs or miſery, gives riſe to both; and this analogy, in all the parts of the preſent theory, may juſtly be regarded as a confirmation of it.

SECTION VIII.

Of QUALITIES IMMEDIATELY AGREEABLE to OTHERS †.

AS the mutual ſhocks, in *ſociety*, and the oppoſitions of intereſt and ſelf-love have conſtrained mankind to eſtabliſh the laws of *juſtice*; in order to preſerve the advantages of common aſſiſtance and protection: In like manner, the eternal contrarieties, in *company*, of men's pride and ſelf conceit, have introduced the rules of GOOD-MANNERS or POLITENESS; in order to facilitate the intercourſe of minds, and an undiſturbed commerce and converſation. Among well-bred people, a mutual deference is affected: Contempt of others diſguiſed: Authority concealed: Atten-

† It is the nature, and, indeed, the definition of virtue, that it is *a quality of the mind agreeable to or approved of by every one, who conſiders or contemplates it.* But ſome qualities produce pleaſure becauſe they are uſeful to ſociety, or uſeful or agreeable to the perſon himſelf; others produce it more immediately: Which is the caſe with the claſs of virtues here conſidered.

tion given to each in his turn: And an eaſy ſtream of converſation maintained, without vehemence, without mutual interruption, without eagerneſs for victory, and without any airs of ſuperiority. Theſe attentions and regards are immediately *agreeable* to others, abſtracted from any conſideration of utility or beneficial tendencies: They conciliate affection, promote eſteem, and enhance extremely the merit of the perſon, who regulates his behaviour by them.

Many of the forms of breeding are arbitrary and caſual: But the thing expreſſed by them is ſtill the ſame: A SPANIARD goes out of his own houſe before his gueſt, to ſignify that he leaves him maſter of all. In other countries, the landlord walks out laſt, as a common mark of deference and regard.

But, in order to render a man perfect *good company*, he muſt have WIT and INGENUITY as well as good-manners. What wit is, it may not be eaſy to define: but it is eaſy ſurely to determine, that it is a quality immediately *agreeable* to others, and communicating, on its firſt appearance, a lively joy and ſatisfaction to every one who has any comprehenſion of it. The moſt profound metaphyſics, indeed, might be employed, in explaining the various kinds and ſpecies of wit; and many claſſes of it, which are now received on the ſole teſtimony of taſte and ſentiment, might, perhaps, be reſolved into more general

general principles. But this is ſufficient for our preſent purpoſe, that it does affect taſte and ſentiment, and beſtowing an immediate enjoyment, is a ſure ſource of approbation and affection.

In countries, where men paſs moſt of their time in converſation, and viſits, and aſſemblies, theſe *companionable* qualities, ſo to ſpeak, are of high eſtimation, and form a chief part of perſonal merit. In countries, where men live a more domeſtic life, and either are employed in buſineſs or amuſe themſelves in a narrower circle of acquaintance, the more ſolid qualities are chiefly regarded. Thus, I have often obſerved, that, among the FRENCH, the firſt queſtions, with regard to a ſtranger, are, *Is he polite? Has he wit?* In our own country, the chief praiſe beſtowed, is always that of a *good-natured, ſenſible fellow.*

In converſation, the lively ſpirit of dialogue is *agreeable*, even to thoſe who deſire not to have any ſhare in the diſcourſe: Hence the teller of long ſtories, or the pompous declaimer, is very little approved of. But moſt men deſire likewiſe their turn in the converſation, and regard, with a very evil eye, that *loquacity*, which deprives them of a right they are naturally ſo jealous of.

There are a ſet of harmleſs *liars*, frequently to be met with in company, who deal much in the marvellous.

marvellous. Their uſual intention is to pleaſe and entertain; but as men are moſt delighted with what they conceive to be truth, theſe people miſtake extremely the means of pleaſing, and incur univerſal blame. Some indulgence, however, to lying or fiction is given in *humorous* ſtories; becauſe it is there really agreeable and entertaining; and truth is not of any importance.

Eloquence, genius of all kinds, even good ſenſe, and ſound reaſoning, when it riſes to an eminent degree, and is employed upon ſubjects of any conſiderable dignity and nice diſcernment; all theſe endowments ſeem immediately agreeable, and have a merit diſtinct from their uſefulneſs. Rarity, likewiſe, which ſo much enhances the price of every thing, muſt ſet an additional value on theſe noble talents of the human mind.

Modeſty may be underſtood in different ſenſes, even abſtracted from chaſtity, which has been already treated of. It ſometimes means that tenderneſs and nicety of honour, that apprehenſion of blame, that dread of intruſion or injury towards others, that PUDOR, which is the proper guardian of every kind of virtue, and a ſure preſervative againſt vice and corruption. But its moſt uſual meaning is when it is oppoſed to *impudence* and *arrogance*, and expreſſes a diffidence of our own judgment, and a due attention

tion and regard to others. In young men chiefly, this quality is a ſure ſign of good ſenſe; and is alſo the certain means of augmenting that endowment, by preſerving their ears open to inſtruction, and making them ſtill graſp after new attainments. But it has a farther charm to every ſpectator; by flattering every man's vanity, and preſenting the appearance of a docile pupil, who receives, with proper attention and reſpect, every word they utter.

Men have, in general, a much greater propenſity to over-value than under-value themſelves; notwithſtanding the opinion of ARISTOTLE *. This makes us more jealous of the exceſs on the former ſide, and cauſes us to regard, with a particular indulgence, all tendency to modeſty and ſelf-diffidence; as eſteeming the danger leſs of falling into any vicious extreme of that nature. It is thus, in countries, where men's bodies are apt to exceed in corpulency, perſonal beauty is placed in a much greater degree of ſlenderneſs, than in countries where that is the moſt uſual defect. Being ſo often ſtruck with inſtances of one ſpecies of deformity, men think they can never keep at too great a diſtance from it, and wiſh always to have a leaning to the oppoſite ſide. In like manner, where the door opened to ſelf-praiſe, and were MONTAIGNE's maxim obſerved,

* Ethic. ad Nicomachum.

that

that one ſhould ſay as frankly, *I have ſenſe, I have learning, I have courage, beauty, or wit*; as it is ſure we often think ſo; were this the caſe, I ſay, every one is ſenſible, that ſuch a flood of impertinence would break in upon us, as would render ſociety wholly intolerable. For this reaſon cuſtom has eſtabliſhed it as a rule, in common ſocieties, that men ſhould not indulge themſelves in ſelf-praiſe, nor even ſpeak much of themſelves; and it is only among intimate friends or people of very manly behaviour, that one is allowed to do himſelf juſtice. No body finds fault with MAURICE, Prince of ORANGE, for his reply to one, who aſked him, whom he eſteemed the firſt general of the age, *The marquis de* SPINOLA, ſaid he, *is the ſecond.* Though it is obſervable, that the ſelf-praiſe implied is here better implied, than if it had been directly expreſſed, without any cover or diſguiſe.

He muſt be a very ſuperficial thinker, who imagines, that all inſtances of mutual deference are to be underſtood in earneſt, and that a man would be more eſteemable for being ignorant of his own merits and accompliſhments. A ſmall bias towards modeſty, even in the internal ſentiments, is favourably regarded, eſpecially in young people; and a ſtrong bias is required in the outward behaviour: But this excludes not a noble pride and ſpirit, which may openly diſplay itſelf in its full extent, when one lies under calumny or oppreſſion of any kind.

The

The generous contumacy of SOCRATES, as CICERO calls it, has been highly celebrated in all ages; and when joined to the uſual modeſty of his behaviour, forms a ſhining character. IPHICRATES, the ATHENIAN, being accuſed of betraying the intereſts of his country, aſked his accuſer, *Would you*, ſays he, *on a like occaſion, have been guilty of that crime? By no means*, replied the other. *And can you then imagine*, cried the hero, *that* IPHICRATES *would be guilty* *? In ſhort, a generous ſpirit and ſelf-value, well founded, decently diſguiſed, and courageouſly ſupported under diſtreſs and calumny, is a great excellency, and ſeems to derive its merit from the noble elevation of its ſentiment, or its immediate agreeableneſs to its poſſeſſor. In ordinary characters, we approve of a bias towards modeſty, which is a quality immediately agreeable to others: The vicious exceſs of the former virtue, namely, inſolence or haughtineſs, is immediately diſagreeable to others: The exceſs of the latter is ſo to the poſſeſſor. Thus are the boundaries of theſe duties adjuſted.

A deſire of fame, reputation, or a character with others, is ſo far from being blameable, that it ſeems inſeparable from virtue, genius, capacity, and a generous or noble diſpoſition. An attention even to trivial matters, in order to pleaſe, is alſo expected and demanded by ſociety; and no one is ſurprized,

* QUINCTIL. lib. v. cap. 12.

if he finds a man in company, to obſerve a greater elegance of dreſs and more pleaſant flow of converſation, than when he paſſes his time at home, and with his own family. Wherein, then, conſiſts VANITY, which is ſo juſtly regarded as a fault or imperfection? It ſeems to conſiſt chiefly in ſuch an intemperate diſplay of our advantages, honours and accompliſhments; in ſuch an importunate and open demand of praiſe and admiration, as is offenſive to others, and encroaches too far on *their* ſecret vanity and ambition. It is beſides a ſure ſymptom of the want of true dignity and elevation of mind, which is ſo great an ornament to any character. For why that impatient deſire of applauſe; as if you were not juſtly entitled to it, and might not reaſonably expect, that it would for ever attend you? Why ſo anxious to inform us of the great company which you have kept; the obliging things which were ſaid to you; the honours, the diſtinctions which you met with; as if theſe were not things of courſe, and what we could readily, of ourſelves, have imagined, without being told of them?

DECENCY, or a proper regard to age, ſex, character and ſtation in the world, may be ranked among the qualities, which are immediately agreeable to others, and which, by that means, acquire praiſe and approbation. An effeminate behaviour in a man, a rough manner in a woman; theſe are ugly, becauſe unſuitable to each character, and different

ſerent from the qualities which we expect in the ſexes. It is as if a tragedy abounded in comic beauties, or a comedy in tragic. The diſproportions hurt the eye, and convey a diſagreeable ſentiment to the ſpectators, the ſource of blame and diſapprobation. This is that *indecorum*, which is explained ſo much at large by CICERO in his Offices.

Among the other virtues, we may alſo give CLEANLINESS a place; ſince it naturally renders us agreeable to others, and is no inconſiderable ſource of love and affection. No one will deny, that a negligence in this particular is a fault; and as faults are nothing but ſmaller vices, and this fault can have no other origin than the uneaſy ſenſation, which it excites in others; we may, in this inſtance, ſeemingly ſo trivial, clearly diſcover the origin of moral diſtinctions, about which the learned have involved themſelves in ſuch mazes of perplexity and error.

But beſides all the *agreeable* qualities, the origin of whoſe beauty, we can, in ſome degree, explain and account for, there ſtill remains ſomething myſterious and inexplicable, which conveys an immediate ſatisfaction to the ſpectator, but how, or why, or for what reaſon, he cannot pretend to determine. There is a MANNER, a grace, a genteelneſs, an I-know-not-what, which ſome men poſſeſs above others,

others, which is very different from external beauty and comelineſs, and which, however, catches our affection almoſt as ſuddenly and powerfully. And though this *manner* be chiefly talked of in the paſſion between the ſexes, where the concealed magic is eaſily explained, yet ſurely much of it prevails in all our eſtimation of characters, and forms no inconſiderable part of perſonal merit. This claſs of accompliſhments, therefore, muſt be truſted entirely to the blind, but ſure teſtimony of taſte and ſentiment; and muſt be conſidered as a part of ethics, left by nature to baffle all the pride of philoſophy, and make her ſenſible of her narrow boundaries and ſlender acquiſitions.

We approve of another, becauſe of his wit, politeneſs, modeſty, decency, or any agreeable quality which he poſſeſſes; although he be not of our acquaintance, nor has ever given us any entertainment, by means of theſe accompliſhments. The idea, which we form of their effect on his acquaintance, has an agreeable influence on our imagination, and gives us the ſentiment of approbation. This principle enters into all the judgments, which we form concerning manners and characters.

SECTION IX.

Conclusion.

PART I.

IT may juſtly appear ſurprizing, that any man, in ſo late an age, ſhould find it requiſite to prove, by elaborate reaſonings, that PERSONAL MERIT conſiſts altogether in the poſſeſſion of mental qualities, *uſeful* or *agreeable* to the *perſon himſelf* or to *others*. It might be expected, that this principle would have occurred even to the firſt rude, unpractiſed enquirers concerning morals, and been received from its own evidence, without any argument or diſputation. Whatever is valuable in any kind ſo naturally claſſes itſelf under the diviſion of *uſeful* or *agreeable*, the *utile* or the *dulce*, that it is not eaſy to imagine, why we ſhould ever ſeek farther, or conſider the queſtion as a matter of nice reſearch or enquiry. And as every thing uſeful or agreeable muſt poſſeſs theſe qualities with regard either to the *perſon himſelf* or to *others*, the compleat delineation or deſcription of merit ſeems to be performed as naturally as a ſhadow is caſt by the ſun, or an image is

reflected upon water. If the ground, on which the ſhadow is caſt, be not broken and uneven; nor the ſurface, from which the image is reflected, diſturbed and confuſed; a juſt figure is immediately preſented, without any art or attention. And it ſeems a reaſonable preſumption, that ſyſtems and hypotheſes have perverted our natural underſtanding; when a theory, ſo ſimple and obvious, could ſo long have eſcaped the moſt elaborate examination.

But however the caſe may have fared with philoſophy; in common life, theſe principles are ſtill implicitly maintained, nor is any other topic of praiſe or blame ever recurred to, when we employ any panegyric or ſatyr, any applauſe or cenſure of human action and behaviour. If we obſerve men, in every intercourſe of buſineſs or pleaſure, in every diſcourſe and converſation; we ſhall find them no where, except in the ſchools, at any loſs upon this ſubject. What ſo natural, for inſtance, as the following dialogue? You are very happy, we ſhall ſuppoſe one to ſay, addreſſing himſelf to another, that you have given your daughter to CLEANTHES. He is a man of honour and humanity. Every one, who has any intercourſe with him, is ſure of *fair* and *kind* treatment *. I congratulate you too, ſays another, on the promiſing expectations of this ſon-in-

* Qualities uſeful to others.

law;

law; whoſe aſſiduous application to the ſtudy of the laws, whoſe quick penetration and early knowledge both of men and buſineſs, prognoſticate the greateſt honours and advancement †. You ſurprize me replies a third, when you talk of CLEANTHES as a man of buſineſs and application. I met him lately in a circle of the gayeſt company, and he was the very life and ſoul of our converſation: So much wit with good manners; ſo much gallantry without affectation; ſo much ingenious knowledge ſo genteelly delivered, I have never before obſerved in any one *. You would admire him ſtill more, ſays a fourth, if you knew him more familiarly. That chearfulneſs, which you might remark in him, is not a ſudden flaſh ſtruck out by company: It runs through the whole tenor of his life, and preſerves a perpetual ſerenity on his countenance, and tranquillity in his ſoul. He has met with ſevere trials, misfortunes as well as dangers; and by his greatneſs of mind, was ſtill ſuperior to all of them ‡. The image, gentlemen, which you have here delineated of CLEANTHES, cry I, is that of accompliſhed merit. Each of you has given a ſtroke of the pencil to his figure; and you have unawares exceeded all the pictures drawn by GRATIAN or CASTIGLIONE. A

† Qualities uſeful to the perſon himſelf.

* Qualities immediately agreeable to others.

‡ Qualities immediately agreeable to the perſon himſelf.

philoſopher might ſelect this character as a model of perfect virtue.

And as every quality, which is uſeful or agreeable to ourſelves or others, is, in common life, allowed to be a part of perſonal merit; ſo no other will ever be received, where men judge of things by their natural, unprejudiced reaſon, without the deluſive gloſſes of ſuperſtition and falſe religion. Celibacy, faſting, penances, mortification, ſelf-denial, humility, ſilence, ſolitude, and the whole train of monkiſh virtues; for what reaſon are they every where rejected by men of ſenſe, but becauſe they ſerve no manner of purpoſe; neither advance a man's fortune in the world, nor render him a more valuable member of ſociety; neither qualify him for the entertainment of company, nor encreaſe his power of ſelf-enjoyment? We obſerve, on the contrary, that they croſs all theſe deſirable ends; ſtupify the underſtanding and harden the heart, obſcure the fancy and ſour the temper. We juſtly, therefore, transfer them to the oppoſite column, and place them in the catalogue of vices; nor has any ſuperſtition force ſufficient, among men of the world, to pervert entirely theſe natural ſentiments. A gloomy, hair-brained enthuſiaſt, after his death, may have a place in the calendar; but will ſcarcely ever be admitted, when alive, into intimacy and

ſociety,

ſociety, except by thoſe who are as delirious and diſmal as himſelf.

It ſeems a happineſs in the preſent theory, that it enters not into that vulgar diſpute concerning the *degrees* of benevolence or ſelf-love, which prevail in human nature; a diſpute which is never likely to have any iſſue, both becauſe men, who have taken party, are not eaſily convinced, and becauſe the phænomena, which can be produced on either ſide, are ſo diſperſed, ſo uncertain, and ſubject to ſo many interpretations, that it is ſcarcely poſſible accurately to compare them, or draw from them any determinate inference or concluſion. It is ſufficient for our preſent purpoſe, if it be allowed, what ſurely, without the greateſt abſurdity, cannot be diſputed, that there is ſome benevolence, however ſmall, infuſed into our boſom; ſome ſpark of friendſhip for human kind; ſome particle of the dove, kneaded into our frame, along with the elements of the wolf and ſerpent. Let theſe generous ſentiments be ſuppoſed ever ſo weak; let them be inſufficient to move even a hand or finger of our body; they muſt ſtill direct the determinations of our mind, and where every thing elſe is equal, produce a cool preference of what is uſeful and ſerviceable to mankind, above what is pernicious and dangerous. A *moral diſtinction*, therefore, immediately ariſes; a general ſentiment of blame and approbation; a tendency, however faint,

to the objects of the one, and a proportionable aversion to those of the other. Nor will these reasoners, who so earnestly maintain the predominant selfishness of human kind, be any wise scandalized at hearing of the weak sentiments of virtue, implanted in our nature. On the contrary, they are found as ready to maintain the one tenet as the other; and their spirit of satyre (for such it appears, rather than of corruption) naturally gives rise to both opinions; which have, indeed, a great and almost an indissoluble connection together.

Avarice, ambition, vanity, and all passions vulgarly, though improperly, comprized under the denomination of *self-love*, are here excluded from our theory concerning the origin of morals, not because they are too weak, but because they have not a proper direction, for that purpose. The notion of morals implies some sentiment common to all mankind, which recommends the same object to general approbation, and makes every man, or most men, agree in the same opinion or decision concerning it. It also implies some sentiment, so universal and comprehensive as to extend to all mankind, and render the actions and conduct, even of the persons the most remote, an object of applause or censure, according as they agree or disagree with that rule of right which is established. These two requisite circumstances belong alone to the sentiment of humanity here

here inſiſted on. The other paſſions produce, in every breaſt, many ſtrong ſentiments of deſire and averſion, affection and hatred; but theſe neither are felt ſo much in common, nor are ſo comprehenſive, as to be the foundation of any general ſyſtem and eſtabliſhed theory of blame or approbation.

When a man denominates another his *enemy*, his *rival*, his *antagoniſt*, his *adverſary*, he is underſtood to ſpeak the language of ſelf-love, and to expreſs ſentiments, peculiar to himſelf, and ariſing from his particular circumſtances and ſituation. But when he beſtows on any man the epithets of *vicious* or *odious* or *depraved*, he then ſpeaks another language, and expreſſes ſentiments, in which, he expects, all his audience are to concur with him. He muſt here, therefore, depart from his private and particular ſituation, and muſt chuſe a point of view, common to him with others: He muſt move ſome univerſal principle of the human frame, and touch a ſtring, to which all mankind have an accord and ſymphony. If he means, therefore, to expreſs, that this man poſſeſſes qualities, whoſe tendency is pernicious to ſociety, he has choſen this common point of view, and has touched the principle of humanity, in which every man, in ſome degree, concurs. While the human heart is compounded of the ſame elements as at preſent, it will never be wholly indifferent to the public good, nor entirely unaffected with the

tendencies of characters and manners. And though this affection of humanity may not generally be eſteemed ſo ſtrong as vanity or ambition, yet, being common to all men, it can alone be the foundation of morals, or of any general ſyſtem of blame or praiſe. One man's ambition is not another's ambition; nor will the ſame event or object ſatisfy both: But the humanity of one man is the humanity of every one; and the ſame object touches this paſſion in all human creatures.

But the ſentiments, which ariſe from humanity, are not only the ſame in all human creatures, and produce the ſame approbation or cenſure; but they alſo comprehend all human creatures; nor is there any one whoſe conduct or character is not, by their means, an object, to every one, of cenſure or approbation. On the contrary, thoſe other paſſions, commonly denominated ſelfiſh, both produce different ſentiments in each individual, according to his particular ſituation; and alſo contemplate the greateſt part of mankind with the utmoſt indifference and unconcern. Whoever has a high regard and eſteem for me flatters my vanity; whoever expreſſes contempt mortifies and diſpleaſes me: But as my name is known but to a ſmall part of mankind, there are few, who come within the ſphere of this paſſion, or excite, on its account, either my affection or diſguſt. But if you repreſent a tyrannical, inſolent,

or barbarous behaviour, in any country or in any age of the world; I ſoon carry my eye to the pernicious tendency of ſuch a conduct, and feel the ſentiments of repugnance and diſpleaſure towards it. No character can be ſo remote as to be, in this light, wholly indifferent to me. What is beneficial to ſociety or to the perſon himſelf muſt ſtill be preferred. And every quality or action, of every human being, muſt, by this means, be ranked under ſome claſs or denomination, expreſſive of general cenſure or applauſe.

What more, therefore, can we aſk to diſtinguiſh the ſentiments, dependant on humanity, from thoſe connected with any other paſſion, or to ſatisfy us, why the former are the origin of morals, not the latter? Whatever conduct gains my approbation, by touching my humanity, procures alſo the applauſe of all mankind, by affecting the ſame principle in them: But what ſerves my avarice or ambition pleaſes theſe paſſions in me alone, and affects not the avarice and ambition of the reſt of mankind. There is no circumſtance of conduct in any man, provided it have a beneficial tendency that is not agreeable to my humanity, however remote the perſon: But every man, ſo far removed as neither to croſs nor ſerve my avarice and ambition, is regarded as wholly indifferent by thoſe paſſions. The diſtinction, therefore, between theſe ſpecies of ſentiment

ſentiment being ſo great and evident, language muſt ſoon be moulded upon it, and muſt invent a peculiar ſet of terms, in order to expreſs thoſe univerſal ſentiments of cenſure or approbation, which ariſe from humanity, or from views of general uſefulneſs and its contrary. VIRTUE and VICE become then known: Morals are recognized: Certain general ideas are framed of human conduct and behaviour: Such meaſures are expected from men, in ſuch ſituations: This action is determined to be conformable to our abſtract rule; that other, contrary. And by ſuch univerſal principles are the particular ſentiments of ſelf-love frequently controuled and limited *.

From inſtances of popular tumults, ſeditions, factions, panics, and of all paſſions, which are ſhared with a multitude; we may learn the influence of ſociety, in exciting and ſupporting any emotion; while the moſt ungovernable diſorders are raiſed, we find, by that means, from the ſlighteſt and moſt frivolous occaſions. SOLON was no very cruel, though, perhaps, an unjuſt legiſlator, who puniſhed neuters in civil wars; and few, I believe, would, in ſuch caſes, incur the penalty, were their affection and diſcourſe allowed ſufficient to abſolve them. No ſelfiſhneſs, and ſcarce any philoſophy, have

* See NOTE [U].

there

there force ſufficient to ſupport a total coolneſs and indifference; and he muſt be more or leſs than man, who kindles not in the common blaze. What wonder then, that moral ſentiments are found of ſuch influence in life; though ſpringing from principles, which may appear, at firſt ſight, ſomewhat ſmall and delicate? But theſe principles, we muſt remark, are ſocial and univerſal: They form, in a manner, the *party* of human-kind againſt vice or diſorder, its common enemy: And as the benevolent concern for others is diffuſed, in a greater or leſs degree over all men, and is the ſame in all, it occurs more frequently in diſcourſe, is cheriſhed by ſociety and converſation, and the blame and approbation, conſequent on it, are thereby rouzed from that lethargy, into which they are probably lulled, in ſolitary and uncultivated nature. Other paſſions, tho' perhaps originally ſtronger, yet being ſelfiſh and private, are often overpowered by its force, and yield the dominion of our breaſt to thoſe ſocial and public principles.

Another ſpring of our conſtitution, that brings a great addition of force to moral ſentiment, is, the love of fame; which rules, with ſuch uncontrolled authority, in all generous minds, and is often the grand object of all their deſigns and undertakings. By our continual and earneſt purſuit of a character, a name, a reputation in the world, we bring our own deport-

deportment and conduct frequently in review, and conſider how they appear in the eyes of thoſe, who approach and regard us. This conſtant habit of ſurveying ourſelf, as it were, in reflection, keeps alive all the ſentiments of right and wrong, and begets, in noble natures, a certain reverence for themſelves as well as others; which is the ſureſt guardian of every virtue. The animal conveniencies and pleaſures ſink gradually in their value; while every inward beauty and moral grace is ſtudiouſly acquired, and the mind is accompliſhed in every perfection, which can adorn or embelliſh a rational creature.

Here is the moſt perfect morality with which we are acquainted: Here is diſplayed the force of many ſympathies. Our moral ſentiment is itſelf a feeling chiefly of that nature: And our regard to a character with others ſeems to ariſe only from a care of preſerving a character with ourſelves; and to obtain this end, we find it neceſſary to prop our tottering judgment on the correſpondent approbation of mankind.

But, in order to accommodate matters, and remove, if poſſible, every difficulty, let us allow all theſe reaſonings to be falſe. Let us allow, that, when we reſolve the pleaſure, which ariſes from views of utility, into the ſentiments of humanity and ſympathy,

pathy, we have embraced a wrong hypotheſis. Let us confeſs it neceſſary to find ſome other explication of that applauſe, which is paid to objects, whether inanimate, animate, or rational, if they have a tendency to promote the welfare and advantage of mankind. However difficult it be to conceive, that an object is approved of on account of its tendency to a certain end, while the end itſelf is totally indifferent; let us ſwallow this abſurdity, and conſider what are the conſequences. The preceding delineation or definition of PERSONAL MERIT muſt ſtill retain its evidence and authority: It muſt ſtill be allowed, that every quality of the mind, which is *uſeful* or *agreeable* to the *perſon himſelf* or to *others*, communicates a pleaſure to the ſpectator, engages his eſteem, and is admitted under the honourable denomination of virtue or merit. Are not juſtice, fidelity, honour, veracity, allegiance, chaſtity, eſteemed ſolely on account of their tendency to promote the good of ſociety? Is not that tendency inſeparable from humanity, benevolence, lenity, generoſity, gratitude, moderation, tenderneſs, friendſhip, and all the other ſocial virtues? Can it poſſibly be doubted, that induſtry, diſcretion, frugality, ſecrecy, order, perſeverance, forethought, judgment, and this whole claſs of virtues and accompliſhments, of which many pages would not contain the catalogue; can it be doubted, I ſay, that the tendency of theſe qualities

qualities to promote the intereſt and happineſs of their poſſeſſor, is the ſole foundation of their merit? Who can diſpute that a mind, which ſupports a perpetual ſerenity and chearfulneſs, a noble dignity and undaunted ſpirit, a tender affection and goodwill to all around; as it has more enjoyment within itſelf, is alſo a more animating and rejoicing ſpectacle, than if dejected with melancholy, tormented with anxiety, irritated with rage, or ſunk into the moſt abject baſeneſs and degeneracy? And as to the qualities, immediately *agreeable to others*, they ſpeak ſufficiently for themſelves; and he muſt be unhappy, indeed, either in his own temper, or in his ſituation and company, who has never perceived the charms of a facetious wit or flowing affability, of a delicate modeſty or decent genteelneſs of addreſs and manner.

I am ſenſible, that nothing can be more unphiloſophical than to be poſitive or dogmatical on any ſubject; and that, even if *exceſſive* ſcepticiſm could be maintained, it would not be more deſtructive to all juſt reaſoning and enquiry. I am convinced, that, where men are the moſt ſure and arrogant, they are commonly the moſt miſtaken, and have there given reins to paſſion, without that proper deliberation and ſuſpence, which can alone ſecure them from the groſſeſt abſurdities. Yet, I muſt confeſs, that this enumeration puts the matter in ſo

ſtrong

ſtrong a light, that I cannot, *at preſent*, be more aſſured of any truth, which I learn from reaſoning and argument, than that perſonal merit conſiſts entirely in the uſefulneſs or agreeableneſs of qualities to the perſon himſelf poſſeſſed of them, or to others, who have any intercourſe with him. But when I reflect, that, though the bulk and figure of the earth have been meaſured and delineated, though the motions of the tides have been accounted for, the order and œconomy of the heavenly bodies ſubjected to their proper laws, and INFINITE itſelf reduced to calculation; yet men ſtill diſpute concerning the foundation of their moral duties: When I reflect on this, I ſay, I fall back into diffidence and ſcepticiſm, and ſuſpect, that an hypotheſis, ſo obvious, had it been a true one, would, long ere now, have been received by the unanimous ſuffrage and conſent of mankind.

PART II.

Having explained the moral *approbation* attending merit or virtue, there remains nothing, but to conſider briefly our intereſted *obligation* to it, and to inquire, whether every man, who has any regard to his own happineſs and welfare, will not beſt find his account in the practice of every moral duty. If this can be clearly aſcertained from the foregoing

theory, we ſhall have the ſatisfaction to reflect, that we have advanced principles, which not only, it is hoped, will ſtand the teſt of reaſoning and inquiry, but may contribute to the amendment of men's lives, and their improvement in morality and ſocial virtue. And though the philoſophical truth of any propoſition by no means depends on its tendency to promote the intereſts of ſociety; yet a man has but a bad grace, who delivers a theory, however true, which, he muſt confeſs, leads to a practice dangerous and pernicious. Why rake into thoſe corners of nature, which ſpread a nuiſance all around? Why dig up the peſtilence from the pit, in which it is buried? The ingenuity of your reſearches may be admired; but your ſyſtems will be deteſted: And mankind will agree, if they cannot refute them, to ſink them, at leaſt, in eternal ſilence and oblivion. Truths, which are *pernicious* to ſociety, if any ſuch there be, will yield to errors, which are ſalutary and *advantageous*.

But what philoſophical truths can be more advantageous to ſociety, than thoſe here delivered, which repreſent virtue in all her genuine and moſt engaging charms, and make us approach her with eaſe, familiarity, and affection? The diſmal dreſs falls off, with which many divines, and ſome philoſophers had covered her; and nothing appears but gentleneſs, humanity, beneficence, affability; nay

nay even, at proper intervals, play, frolic, and gaiety. She talks not of uſeleſs auſterities and rigours, ſuffering and ſelf-denial. She declares, that her ſole purpoſe is, to make her votaries and all mankind, during every inſtant of their exiſtence, if poſſible, cheerful and happy; nor does ſhe ever willingly part with any pleaſure but in hopes of ample compenſation in ſome other period of their lives. The ſole trouble, which ſhe demands, is that of juſt calculation, and a ſteady preference of the greater happineſs. And if any auſtere pretenders approach her, enemies to joy and pleaſure, ſhe either rejects them as hypocrites and deceivers; or if ſhe admits them in her train, they are ranked, however, among the leaſt favoured of her votaries.

And, indeed, to drop all figurative expreſſion, what hopes can we ever have of engaging mankind to a practice, which we confeſs full of auſterity and rigour? Or what theory of morality can ever ſerve any uſeful purpoſe, unleſs it can ſhow, by a particular detail, that all the duties, which it recommends, are alſo the true intereſt of each individual? The peculiar advantage of the foregoing ſyſtem, ſeems to be, that it furniſhes proper mediums for that purpoſe.

That the virtues which are immediately *uſeful* or *agreeable* to the perſon poſſeſſed of them, are deſire-

able in a view to ſelf-intereſt, it would ſurely be ſuperfluous to prove. Moraliſts, indeed, may ſpare themſelves all the pains, which they often take in recommending theſe duties. To what purpoſe collect arguments to evince, that temperance is advantageous, and the exceſſes of pleaſure hurtful? When it appears, that theſe exceſſes are only denominated ſuch, becauſe they are hurtful; and that, if the unlimited uſe of ſtrong liquors, for inſtance, no more impaired health or the faculties of mind and body than the uſe of air or water, it would not be a whit more vicious or blameable.

It ſeems equally ſuperfluous to prove, that the *companionable* virtues of good manners and wit, decency and genteelneſs, are more deſirable than the contrary qualities. Vanity alone, without other conſiderations, is a ſufficient motive to make us wiſh the poſſeſſion of theſe accompliſhments. No man was ever willingly deficient in this particular. All our failures here proceed from bad education, want of capacity, or a perverſe and unpliable diſpoſition. Would you have your company coveted, admired, followed; rather than hated, deſpiſed, avoided? Can any one ſeriouſly deliberate in the caſe? As no enjoyment is ſincere, without ſome reference to company and ſociety; ſo no ſociety can be agreeable or even tolerable, where a man feels his preſence unwelcome, and diſcovers all around him ſymptoms of diſguſt and averſion.

But

But why, in the greater ſociety or confederacy of mankind, ſhould not the caſe be the ſame as in particular clubs and companies? Why is it more doubtful, that the enlarged virtues of humanity, generoſity, beneficence, are deſirable with a view to happineſs and ſelf-intereſt, than the limited endowments of ingenuity and politeneſs? Are we apprehenſive, leſt thoſe ſocial affections interfere, in a greater and more immediate degree than any other purſuits, with private utility, and cannot be gratified, without ſome important ſacrifices of honour and advantage? If ſo, we are but ill inſtructed in the nature of the human paſſions, and are more influenced by verbal diſtinctions than by real differences.

Whatever contradiction may vulgarly be ſuppoſed betwixt the *ſelfiſh* and *ſocial* ſentiments or diſpoſitions, they are really no more oppoſite than ſelfiſh and ambitious, ſelfiſh and revengeful, ſelfiſh and vain. It is requiſite, that there be an original propenſity of ſome kind, in order to be a baſis to ſelf-love, by giving a reliſh to the objects of its purſuit; and none more fit for this purpoſe than benevolence or humanity. The goods of fortune are ſpent in one gratification or other: The miſer, who accumulates his annual income, and lends it out at intereſt, has really ſpent it in the gratification of his avarice. And it would be difficult to ſhow, why a

man is more a loſer by a generous action, than by any other method of expence; ſince the utmoſt which he can attain, by the moſt elaborate ſelfiſhneſs, is the indulgence of ſome affection.

Now if life, without paſſion, muſt be altogether inſipid and tireſome; let a man ſuppoſe that he has full power of modelling his own diſpoſition, and let him deliberate what appetite or deſire he would chooſe for the foundation of his happineſs and enjoyment. Every affection, he would obſerve, when gratified by ſucceſs, gives a ſatisfaction proportioned to its force and violence; but beſides this advantage, common to all, the immediate feeling of benevolence and friendſhip, humanity and kindneſs, is ſweet, ſmooth, tender, and agreeable, independent of all fortune and accidents. Theſe virtues are beſides attended with a pleaſing conſciouſneſs or remembrance, and keep us in humour with ourſelves as well as others; while we retain the agreeable reflection of having done our part towards mankind and ſociety. And though all men ſhow a jealouſy of our ſucceſs in the purſuits of avarice and ambition; yet are we almoſt ſure of their good-will and good-wiſhes, ſo long as we perſevere in the paths of virtue, and employ ourſelves in the execution of generous plans and purpoſes. What other paſſion is there where we ſhall find ſo many advantages united; an agreeable ſentiment, a pleaſing conſciouſneſs, a

good

good reputation? But of theſe truths, we may obſerve, men are, of themſelves, pretty much convinced; nor are they deficient in their duty to ſociety, becauſe they would not wiſh to be generous, friendly, and humane; but becauſe they do not feel themſelves ſuch.

Treating vice with the greateſt candour, and making it all poſſible conceſſions, we muſt acknowledge, that there is not, in any inſtance, the ſmalleſt pretext for giving it the preference above virtue, with a view to ſelf-intereſt; except, perhaps, in the caſe of juſtice, where a man, taking things in a certain light, may often ſeem to be a loſer by his integrity. And though it is allowed, that, without a regard to property, no ſociety could ſubſiſt; yet, according to the imperfect way in which human affairs are conducted, a ſenſible knave, in particular incidents, may think, that an act of iniquity or infidelity will make a conſiderable addition to his fortune, without cauſing any conſiderable breach in the ſocial union and confederacy. That *honeſty is the beſt policy*, may be a good general rule; but is liable to many exceptions: And he, it may, perhaps, be judged, conducts himſelf with moſt wiſdom, who obſerves the general rule, and takes advantage of all the exceptions.

I muſt confeſs, that, if a man thinks, that this reaſoning much requires an anſwer, it will be a

little difficult to find any, which will to him appear ſatisfactory and convincing. If his heart rebels not againſt ſuch pernicious maxims, if he feels no reluctance to the thoughts of villany or baſeneſs, he has indeed loſt a conſiderable motive to virtue; and we may expect, that his practice will be anſwerable to his ſpeculation. But in all ingenuous natures, the antipathy to treachery and roguery is too ſtrong to be counterbalanced by any views of profit or pecuniary advantage. Inward peace of mind, conſciouſneſs of integrity, a ſatisfactory review of our own conduct; theſe are circumſtances very requiſite to happineſs, and will be cheriſhed and cultivated by every honeſt man, who feels the importance of them.

Such a one has, beſides the frequent ſatisfaction of ſeeing knaves, with all their pretended cunning and ability, betrayed by their own maxims; and while they purpoſe to cheat with moderation and ſecrecy, a tempting incident occurs, nature is frail, and they give into the ſnare; whence they can never extricate themſelves, without a total loſs of reputation, and the forfeiture of all future truſt and confidence with mankind.

But were they ever ſo ſecret and ſucceſsful, the honeſt man, if he has any tincture of philoſophy, or even common obſervation and reflection, will diſcover

cover that they themſelves are, in the end, the greateſt dupes, and have ſacrificed the invaluable enjoyment of a character, with themſelves at leaſt, for the acquiſition of worthleſs toys and gewgaws. How little is requiſite to ſupply the *neceſſities* of nature? And in a view to *pleaſure*, what compariſon between the unbought ſatisfactions of converſation, ſociety, ſtudy, even health and the common beauties of nature, but above all the peaceful reflection on one's own conduct: What compariſon, I ſay, between theſe, and the feveriſh, empty amuſements of luxury and expence? Theſe natural pleaſures, indeed, are really without price; both becauſe they are below all price in their attainment, and above it in their enjoyment.

APPENDIX I.

CONCERNING MORAL SENTIMENT.

IF the foregoing hypotheſis be received, it will now be eaſy for us to determine the queſtion firſt ſtarted *, concerning the general principles of morals; and though we poſtponed the deciſion of that queſtion, leſt it ſhould then involve us in intricate ſpeculations, which are unfit for moral diſcourſes, we may reſume it at preſent, and examine how far either *reaſon* or *ſentiment* enters into all deciſions of praiſe or cenſure.

One principal foundation of moral praiſe being ſuppoſed to lie in the uſefulneſs of any quality or action; it is evident, that *reaſon* muſt enter for a conſiderable ſhare in all deciſions of this kind; ſince nothing but that faculty can inſtruct us in the tendency of qualities and actions, and point out their beneficial conſequences to ſociety and to their poſſeſſors. In many caſes, this is an affair liable to

* Sect. I.

great

great controverſy: Doubts may ariſe; oppoſite intereſts may occur; and a preference muſt be given to one ſide, from very nice views, and a ſmall overbalance of utility. This is particularly remarkable in queſtions with regard to juſtice; as is, indeed, natural to ſuppoſe, from that ſpecies of utility, which attends this virtue †. Were every ſingle inſtance of juſtice, like that of benevolence, uſeful to ſociety; this would be a more ſimple ſtate of the caſe, and ſeldom liable to great controverſy. But as ſingle inſtances of juſtice are often pernicious in their firſt and immediate tendency, and as the advantage to ſociety reſults only from the obſervance of the general rule, and from the concurrence and combination of ſeveral perſons in the ſame equitable conduct; the caſe here becomes more intricate and involved. The various circumſtances of ſociety; the various conſequences of any practice; the various intereſts, which may be propoſed: Theſe, on many occaſions, are doubtful, and ſubject to great diſcuſſion and enquiry. The object of municipal laws is to fix all the queſtions with regard to juſtice: The debates of civilians; the reflections of politicians; the precedents of hiſtories and public records, are all directed to the ſame purpoſe. And a very accurate *reaſon* or *judgment* is often requiſite, to give

† See Appendix II.

the

the true determination, amidſt ſuch intricate doubts ariſing from obſcure or oppoſite utilities.

But though reaſon, when fully aſſiſted and improved, be ſufficient to inſtruct us in the pernicious or uſeful tendencies of qualities and actions; it is not alone ſufficient to produce any moral blame or approbation. Utility is only a tendency to a certain end; and were the end totally indifferent to us, we ſhould feel the ſame indifference towards the means. It is requiſite a *ſentiment* ſhould here diſplay itſelf, in order to give a preference to the uſeful above the pernicious tendencies. This ſentiment can be no other than a feeling for the happineſs of mankind, and a reſentment of their miſery; ſince theſe are the different ends, which virtue and vice have a tendency to promote. Here, therefore, *reaſon* inſtructs us in the ſeveral tendencies of actions, and *humanity* makes a diſtinction in favour of thoſe, which are uſeful and beneficial.

This partition between the faculties of underſtanding and ſentiment, in all moral deciſions, ſeems clear from the preceding hypotheſis. But I ſhall ſuppoſe that hypotheſis falſe: It will then be requiſite to look out for ſome other theory, that may be ſatisfactory; and I dare venture to affirm, that none ſuch will ever be found, ſo long as we ſuppoſe reaſon

reaſon to be the ſole ſource of morals. To prove this, it will be proper to weigh the five following conſiderations.

I. It is eaſy for a falſe hypotheſis to maintain ſome appearance of truth, while it keeps wholly in generals, makes uſe of undefined terms, and employs compariſons, inſtead of inſtances. This is particularly remarkable in that philoſophy, which aſcribes the diſcernment of all moral diſtinctions to reaſon alone, without the concurrence of ſentiment. It is impoſſible, in any particular inſtance, that this hypotheſis can ſo much as be rendered intelligible; whatever ſpecious figure it may make in general declamations and diſcourſes. Examine the crime of *ingratitude*, for inſtance; which has place, whereever we obſerve good-will, expreſſed and known, together with good-offices performed, on the one ſide, and a return of ill-will or indifference, with ill-offices or neglect on the other: Anatomize all theſe circumſtances, and examine, by your reaſon alone, in what conſiſts the demerit or blame: You never will come to any iſſue or concluſion.

Reaſon judges either of *matter of fact* or of *relations*. Enquire then, *firſt*, where is that matter of fact, which we here call *crime*; point it out; determine the time of its exiſtence; deſcribe its eſſence or nature; explain the ſenſe or faculty, to which it diſcovers

diſcovers itſelf. It reſides in the mind of the perſon, who is ungrateful. He muſt, therefore, feel it, and be conſcious of it. But nothing is there, except the paſſion of ill-will or abſolute indifference. You cannot ſay, that theſe, of themſelves, always, and in all circumſtances, are crimes. No: They are only crimes, when directed towards perſons, who have before expreſſed and diſplayed good-will towards us. Conſequently, we may infer, that the crime of ingratitude is not any particular individual *fact*; but ariſes from a complication of circumſtances, which, being preſented to the ſpectator, excites the *ſentiment* of blame, by the particular ſtructure and fabric of his mind.

This repreſentation, you ſay, is falſe. Crime, indeed, conſiſts not in a particular *fact*, of whoſe reality we are aſſured by *reaſon*: But it conſiſts in certain *moral relations*, diſcovered by reaſon, in the ſame manner as we diſcover, by reaſon, the truths of geometry or algebra. But what are the relations, I aſk, of which you here talk? In the caſe ſtated above, I ſee firſt good-will and good-offices in one perſon; then ill-will and ill-offices in the other. Between theſe, there is the relation of *contrariety*. Does the crime conſiſt in that relation? But ſuppoſe a perſon bore me ill-will or did me ill-offices; and I, in return, were indifferent towards him, or did him good-offices: Here is the ſame relation of

contrariety;

contrariety; and yet my conduct is often highly laudable. Twist and turn this matter, as much as you will, you can never rest the morality on relation; but must have recourse to the decisions of sentiment.

When it is affirmed, that two and three are equal to the half of ten; this relation of equality, I understand perfectly. I conceive, that if ten be divided into two parts, of which one has as many units as the other; and if any of these parts be compared to two added to three, it will contain as many units as that compound number. But when you draw thence a comparison to moral relations, I own that I am altogether at a loss to understand you. A moral action, a crime, such as ingratitude, is a complicated object. Does the morality consist in the relation of its parts to each other. How? After what manner? Specify the relation: Be more particular and explicite in your propositions; and you will easily see their falsehood.

No, say you, the morality consists in the relation of actions to the rule of right; and they are denominated good or ill, according as they agree or disagree with it. What then is this rule of right? In what does it consist? How is it determined? By reason, you'll say, which examines the moral relations of actions. So that moral relations are determined

mined by the compariſon of actions to a rule. And that rule is determined by conſidering the moral relations of objects. Is not this fine reaſoning?

All this is metaphyſics, you cry: That is enough; There needs nothing more to give a ſtrong preſumption of falſehood. Yes, reply I: Here are metaphyſics ſurely: But they are all on your ſide, who advance an abſtruſe hypotheſis, which can never be made intelligible, nor quadrate with any particular inſtance or illuſtration. The hypotheſis which we embrace is plain. It maintains, that morality is determined by ſentiment. It defines virtue to be *whatever mental action or quality gives to a ſpectator the pleaſing ſentiment of approbation*; and vice the contrary. We then proceed to examine a plain matter of fact, *viz.* what actions have this influence: We conſider all the circumſtances, in which theſe actions agree: And from thence endeavour to extract ſome general obſervations with regard to theſe ſentiments. If you call this metaphyſics, and find any thing abſtruſe here, you need only conclude, that your turn of mind is not ſuited to the moral ſciences.

II. When a man, at any time, deliberates concerning his own conduct, (as, whether he had better, in a particular emergence, aſſiſt a brother or a benefactor) he muſt conſider theſe ſeparate relations, with

with all the circumſtances and ſituations of the perſons, in order to determine the ſuperior duty and obligation: And in order to determine the proportion of lines in any triangle, it is neceſſary to examine the nature of that figure, and the relations, which its ſeveral parts bear to each other. But notwithſtanding this appearing ſimilarity in the two caſes, there is, at bottom, an extreme difference between them. A ſpeculative reaſoner concerning triangles or circles conſiders the ſeveral known and given relations of the parts of theſe figures; and from thence infers ſome unknown relation, which is dependent on the former. But in moral deliberations, we muſt be acquainted, before-hand, with all the objects, and all their relations to each other; and from a compariſon of the whole, fix our choice or approbation. No new fact to be aſcertained: No new relation to be diſcovered. All the circumſtances of the caſe are ſuppoſed to be laid before us, ere we can fix any ſentence of blame or approbation. If any material circumſtance be yet unknown or doubtful, we muſt firſt employ our enquiry or intellectual faculties to aſſure us of it; and muſt ſuſpend for a time all moral deciſion or ſentiment. While we are ignorant, whether a man was aggreſſor or not, how can we determine whether the perſon, who killed him, be criminal or innocent? But after every circumſtance, every relation is known, the underſtanding has no farther room to operate, nor any object,

object, on which it could employ itſelf. The approbation or blame, which then enſues, cannot be the work of the judgment, but of the heart; and is not a ſpeculative propoſition or affirmation, but an active feeling or ſentiment. In the diſquiſitions of the underſtanding, from known circumſtances and relations, we infer ſome new and unknown. In moral deciſions, all the circumſtances and relations muſt be previouſly known; and the mind, from the contemplation of the whole, feels ſome new impreſſion of affection or diſguſt, eſteem or contempt, approbation or blame.

Hence the great difference between a miſtake of *fact* and one of *right*; and hence the reaſon, why the one is commonly criminal and not the other. When ŒDIPUS killed LAIUS, he was ignorant of the relation, and from circumſtances, innocent and involuntary, formed erroneous opinions concerning the action which he committed. But when NERO killed AGRIPPINA, all the relations between himſelf and the perſon, and all the circumſtances of the fact were antecedently known to him: But the motive of revenge, or fear, or intereſt, prevailed in his ſavage heart over the ſentiments of duty and humanity. And when we expreſs that deteſtation againſt him, to which he, himſelf, in a little time, became inſenſible; it is not, that we ſee any relations, of which he was ignorant; but that, from the

the rectitude of our diſpoſition, we feel ſentiments, againſt which he was hardened, from flattery and a long perſeverance in the moſt enormous crimes. In theſe ſentiments, then, not in a diſcovery of relations of any kind, do all moral determinations conſiſt. Before we can pretend to form any deciſion of this kind, every thing muſt be known and aſcertained on the ſide of the object or action. Nothing remains but to feel, on our part, ſome ſentiment of blame or approbation; whence we pronounce the action criminal or virtuous.

III. This doctrine will become ſtill more evident, if we compare moral beauty with natural, to which, in many particulars, it bears ſo near a reſemblance. It is on the proportion, relation, and poſition of parts, that all natural beauty depends; but it would be abſurd thence to infer, that the perception of beauty, like that of truth in geometrical problems, conſiſts wholly in the perception of relations, and was performed entirely by the underſtanding or intellectual faculties. In all the ſciences, our mind, from the known relations, inveſtigates the unknown: But in all deciſions of taſte or external beauty, all the relations are before-hand obvious to the eye; and we thence proceed to feel a ſentiment of complacency or diſguſt, according to the nature of the object, and diſpoſition of our organs.

Euclid has fully explained all the qualities of the circle; but has not, in any propoſition, ſaid a word of its beauty. The reaſon is evident. The beauty is not a quality of the circle. It lies not in any part of the line, whoſe parts are equally diſtant from a common center. It is only the effect, which that figure operates upon the mind, whoſe peculiar fabric or ſtructure renders it ſuſceptible of ſuch ſentiments. In vain would you look for it in the circle, or ſeek it, either by your ſenſes or by mathematical reaſonings, in all the properties of that figure.

Attend to PALLADIO and PERRAULT, while they explain all the parts and proportions of a pillar: They talk of the cornice and frieze and baſe and entablature and ſhaft and architrave; and give the deſcription and poſition of each of theſe members. But ſhould you aſk the deſcription and poſition of its beauty, they would readily reply, that the beauty is not in any of the parts or members of a pillar, but reſults from the whole, when that complicated figure is preſented to an intelligent mind, ſuſceptible of thoſe finer ſenſations. 'Till ſuch a ſpectator appear, there is nothing but a figure of ſuch particular dimenſions and proportions: From his ſentiments alone ariſe its elegance and beauty.

Again; attend to CICERO, while he paints the crimes of a VERRES or a CATALINE; you muſt

acknowledge that the moral turpitude reſults, in the ſame manner, from the contemplation of the whole, when preſented to a being, whoſe organs have ſuch a particular ſtructure and formation. The orator may paint rage, inſolence, barbarity on the one ſide: Meekneſs, ſuffering, ſorrow, innocence on the other: But if you feel no indignation or compaſſion ariſe in you from this complication of circumſtances, you would in vain aſk him, in what conſiſts the crime or villany, which he ſo vehemently exclaims againſt: At what time, or on what ſubject it firſt began to exiſt: And what has a few months afterwards become of it, when every diſpoſition and thought of all the actors is totally altered, or annihilated. No ſatisfactory anſwer can be given to any of theſe queſtions, upon the abſtract hypotheſis of morals; and we muſt at laſt acknowledge, that the crime or immorality is no particular fact or relation, which can be the object of the underſtanding: But ariſes entirely from the ſentiment of diſapprobation, which, by the ſtructure of human nature, we unavoidably feel on the apprehenſion of barbarity or treachery.

IV. Inanimate objects may bear to each other all the ſame relations, which we obſerve in moral agents; though the former can never be the object of love or hatred, nor are conſequently ſuſceptible of merit or iniquity. A young tree, which over-

tops and deſtroys its parent, ſtands in all the ſame relations with NERO, when he murdered AGRIPPINA; and if morality conſiſted in any abſtract relations, would, no doubt, be equally criminal.

V. It appears evident, that the ultimate ends of human actions can never, in any caſe, be accounted for by *reaſon*, but recommend themſelves entirely to the ſentiments and affections of mankind, without any dependance on the intellectual faculties. Aſk a man, *why he uſes exerciſe*; he will anſwer, *becauſe he deſires to keep his health.* If you then enquire, *why he deſires health*, he will readily reply, *becauſe ſickneſs is painful.* If you puſh your enquiries farther, and deſire a reaſon, *why he hates pain*, it is impoſſible he can ever give any. This is an ultimate end, and is never referred to any other object.

Perhaps, to your ſecond queſtion, *why he deſires health*, he may alſo reply, that *it is neceſſary for the exerciſe of his calling.* If you aſk, *why he is anxious on that head*, he will anſwer, *becauſe he deſires to get money.* If you demand *Why? It is the inſtrument of pleaſure*, ſays he. And beyond this it is an abſurdity to aſk for a reaſon. It is impoſſible there can be a progreſs *in infinitum*; and that one thing can always be a reaſon, why another is deſired. Something muſt be deſirable on its own account, and becauſe of its immediate accord or agreement with human ſentiment and affection.

Now

Now as virtue is an end, and is deſirable on its own account, without fee or reward, merely for the immediate ſatisfaction which it conveys; it is requiſite that there ſhould be ſome ſentiment, which it touches; ſome internal taſte or feeling, or whatever you pleaſe to call it, which diſtinguiſhes moral good and evil, and which embraces the one and rejects the other.

Thus the diſtinct boundaries and offices of *reaſon* and of *taſte* are eaſily aſcertained. The former conveys the knowledge of truth and falſehood: The latter gives the ſentiment of beauty and deformity, vice and virtue. The one diſcovers objects, as they really ſtand in nature, without addition or diminution: The other has a productive faculty, and gilding or ſtaining all natural objects with the colours, borrowed from internal ſentiment, raiſes, in a manner, a new creation. Reaſon, being cool and diſengaged, is no motive to action, and directs only the impulſe received from appetite or inclination, by ſhowing us the means of obtaining happineſs or avoiding miſery: Taſte, as it gives pleaſure or pain, and thereby conſtitutes happineſs or miſery, becomes a motive to action, and is the firſt ſpring or impulſe to deſire and volition. From circumſtances and relations, known or ſuppoſed, the former leads us to the diſcovery of the concealed and unknown: After all cicumſtances and relations are

laid before us, the latter makes us feel from the whole a new ſentiment of blame or approbation. The ſtandard of the one, being founded on the nature of things, is eternal and inflexible, even by the will of the Supreme Being: The ſtandard of the other, ariſing from the internal frame and conſtitution of animals, is ultimately derived from that Supreme Will, which beſtowed on each being its peculiar nature, and arranged the ſeveral claſſes and orders of exiſtence.

APPENDIX II.

SOME FARTHER CONSIDERATIONS with regard to JUSTICE.

THE intention of this appendix is to give ſome more particular explication of the origin and nature of juſtice, and to mark ſome differences between it and the other virtues.

The ſocial virtues of humanity and benevolence exert their influence immediately, by a direct tendency or inſtinct, which keeps chiefly in view the ſimple object, moving the affections, and comprehends not any ſcheme or ſyſtem, nor the conſequences reſulting from the concurrence, imitation, or example of others. A parent flies to the relief of his child; tranſported by that natural ſympathy, which actuates him, and which affords no leiſure to reflect on the ſentiments or conduct of the reſt of mankind in like circumſtances. A generous man embraces chearfully an opportunity of ſerving his friend; becauſe he then feels himſelf under the dominion of the be-

neficent affections, nor is he concerned whether any other perſon in the univerſe was ever before actuated by ſuch noble motives, or will ever afterwards prove their influence. In all theſe caſes, the ſocial paſſions have in view a ſingle individual object, and purſue alone the ſafety or happineſs of the perſon loved and eſteemed. With this they are ſatisfied: In this, they acquieſce. And as the good reſulting from their benign influence, is in itſelf compleat and entire, it alſo excites the moral ſentiment of approbation, without any reflection on farther conſequences, and without the more enlarged views of the concurrence or imitation of the other members of ſociety. On the contrary, were the generous friend or diſintereſted patriot to ſtand alone in the practice of beneficence; this would rather inhance his value in our eyes, and join the praiſe of rarity and novelty to his other more exalted merits.

The caſe is not the ſame with the ſocial virtues of juſtice and fidelity. They are highly uſeful, or indeed abſolutely neceſſary to the well-being of mankind: But the benefit, reſulting from them, is not the conſequence of every individual ſingle act; but ariſes from the whole ſcheme or ſyſtem, concurred in by the whole, or the greateſt part of the ſociety. General peace and order are the attendants of juſtice or a general abſtinence from the poſſeſſions of others: But a particular regard to the particular right of

one

one individual citizen may frequently, conſidered in itſelf, be productive of pernicious conſequences. The reſult of the individual acts is here, in many inſtances, directly oppoſite to that of the whole ſyſtem of actions; and the former may be extremely hurtful, while the latter is, to the higheſt degree, advantageous. Riches, inherited from a parent, are, in a bad man's hand, the inſtruments of miſchief. The right of ſucceſſion may, in one inſtance, be hurtful. Its benefit ariſes only from the obſervance of the general rule; and it is ſufficient, if compenſation be thereby made for all the ills and inconveniencies, which flow from particular characters and ſituations.

Cyrus, young and unexperienced, conſidered only the individual caſe before him, and reflected on its limited fitneſs and convenience, when he aſſigned the long coat to the tall boy, and the ſhort coat to the other of ſmaller ſize. His governor inſtructed him better; while he pointed out more enlarged views and conſequences, and informed his pupil of the general, inflexible rules, neceſſary to ſupport general peace and order in ſociety.

The happineſs and proſperity of mankind, ariſing from the ſocial virtue of benevolence and its ſubdiviſions, may be compared to a wall, built by many hands; which ſtill riſes by each ſtone, that is heaped

upon

upon it, and receives encreaſe proportional to the diligence and care of each workman. The ſame happineſs, raiſed by the ſocial virtue of juſtice and its ſubdiviſions, may be compared to the building of a vault, where each individual ſtone would, of itſelf, fall to the ground; nor is the whole fabric ſupported but by the mutual aſſiſtance and combination of its correſponding parts.

All the laws of nature, which regulate property, as well as all civil laws, are general, and regard alone ſome eſſential circumſtances of the caſe, without taking into conſideration the characters, ſituations and connexions of the perſon concerned, or any particular conſequences which may reſult from the determination of theſe laws, in any particular caſe which offers. They deprive without ſcruple, a beneficent man of all his poſſeſſions, if acquired by miſtake, without a good title; in order to beſtow them on a ſelfiſh miſer, who has already heaped up immenſe ſtores of ſuperfluous riches. Public utility requires, that property ſhould be regulated by general inflexible rules; and though ſuch rules are adopted as beſt ſerve the ſame end of public utility, it is impoſſible for them to prevent all particular hardſhips, or make beneficial conſequences reſult from every individual caſe. It is ſufficient, if the whole plan or ſcheme be neceſſary to the ſupport of civil ſociety, and if the balance of good, in the main,

main, does thereby preponderate much above that of evil. Even the general laws of the univerſe, tho' planned by infinite wiſdom, cannot exclude all evil or inconvenience, in every particular operation.

It has been aſſerted by ſome, that juſtice ariſes from HUMAN CONVENTIONS, and proceeds from the voluntary choice, conſent, or combination of mankind. If by *convention* be here meant a *promiſe* (which is the moſt uſual ſenſe of the word) nothing can be more abſurd than this poſition. The obſervance of promiſes is itſelf one of the moſt conſiderable parts of juſtice; and we are not ſurely bound to keep our word, becauſe we have given our word to keep it. But if by convention be meant a ſenſe of common intereſt; which ſenſe each man feels in his own breaſt, which he remarks in his fellows, and which carries him, in concurrence with others, into a general plan or ſyſtem of actions, which tends to public utility; it muſt be owned, that, in this ſenſe, juſtice ariſes from human conventions. For if it be allowed (what is, indeed, evident) that the particular conſequences of a particular act of juſtice may be hurtful to the public as well as to individuals; it follows, that every man, in embracing that virtue, muſt have an eye to the whole plan or ſyſtem, and muſt expect the concurrence of his fellows in the ſame conduct and behaviour. Did all his views terminate in the conſe-

quences

quences of each act of his own, his benevolence and humanity, as well as his self-love, might often prescribe to him measures of conduct very different from those, which are agreeable to the strict rules of right and justice.

Thus two men pull the oars of a boat by common convention, for common interest, without any promise or contract: Thus gold and silver are made the measures of exchange; thus speech and words and language are fixed, by human convention and agreement. Whatever is advantageous to two or more persons, if all perform their part; but what loses all advantage, if only one perform, can arise from no other principle. There would otherwise be no motive for any one of them to enter into that scheme of conduct *.

The word, *natural*, is commonly taken in so many senses, and is of such a loose signification, that it seems to little purpose to dispute, whether justice be natural or not. If self-love, if benevolence be natural to man; if reason and forethought be also natural; then may the same epithet be applied to justice, order, fidelity, property, society. Men's inclination, their necessities lead them to combine; their understanding and experience tell them, that this combi-

* See NOTE [W].

nation

nation is impoſſible, where each governs himſelf by no rule, and pays no regard to the poſſeſſions of others: And from theſe paſſions and reflections conjoined, as ſoon as we obſerve like paſſions and reflections in others, the ſentiment of juſtice, through all ages, has infallibly and certainly had place, to ſome degrée or other, in every individual of human ſpecies. In ſo ſagacious an animal, what neceſſarily ariſes from the exertion of his intellectual faculties, may juſtly be eſteemed natural †.

Among all civilized nations, it has been the conſtant endeavour to remove every thing arbitrary and partial from the deciſion of property, and to fix the ſentence of judges by ſuch general views and conſiderations, as may be equal to every member of the ſociety. For beſides, that nothing could be more dangerous than to accuſtom the bench, even in the ſmalleſt inſtance, to regard private friendſhip or enmity; it is certain, that men, where they imagine, that there was no other reaſon for the preference of their adverſary but perſonal favour, are apt to entertain the ſtrongeſt ill-will againſt the magiſtrates and judges. When natural reaſon, therefore, points out no fixed view of public utility, by which a controverſy of property can be decided, poſitive laws are often framed to ſupply its place, and direct the procedure of all courts of judicature. Where

† See NOTE [X].

theſe

theſe too fail, as often happens, precedents are called for; and a former deciſion, though given itſelf without any ſufficient reaſon, juſtly becomes a ſufficient reaſon for a new deciſion. If direct laws and precedents be wanting, imperfect and indirect ones are brought in aid; and the controverted caſe is ranged under them, by analogical reaſonings and compariſons, and ſimilitudes, and correſpondencies, which are often more fanciful than real. In general, it may ſafely be aſſerted, that juriſprudence is, in this reſpect, different from all the ſciences; and that in many of its nicer queſtions, there cannot properly be ſaid to be truth or falſehood on either ſide. If one pleader brings the caſe under any former law or precedent, by a refined analogy or compariſon; the oppoſite pleader is not at a loſs to find an oppoſite analogy or compariſon: And the preference given by the judge is often founded more on taſte and imagination than on any ſolid argument. Public utility is the general object of all courts of judicature; and this utility too requires a ſtable rule in all controverſies: But where ſeveral rules, nearly equal and indifferent, preſent themſelves, it is a very ſlight turn of thought, which fixes the deciſion in favour of either party *.

We may juſt obſerve, before we conclude this ſubject, that, after the laws of juſtice are fixed by

* See NOTE [Y].

views

views of general utility, the injury, the hardſhip, the harm, which reſult to any individual from a violation of them, enter very much into conſideration, and are a great ſource of that univerſal blame, which attends every wrong or iniquity. By the laws of ſociety, this coat, this horſe is mine, and *ought* to remain perpetually in my poſſeſſion: I reckon on the ſecure enjoyment of it: By depriving me of it, you diſappoint my expectations, and doubly diſpleaſe me, and offend every byſtander. It is a public wrong, ſo far as the rules of equity are violated: It is a private harm, ſo far as an individual is injured. And though the ſecond conſideration could have no place, were not the former antecedently eſtabliſhed: For otherwiſe the diſtinction of *mine* and *thine* would be unknown in ſociety: Yet there is no queſtion, but the regard to general good is much enforced by the reſpect to particular. What injures the community, without hurting any individual, is often more lightly thought of. But where the greateſt public wrong is alſo conjoined with a conſiderable private one, no wonder the higheſt diſapprobation attends ſo iniquitous a behaviour.

APPENDIX III.

Of some Verbal Disputes.

NOthing is more uſual than for philoſophers to encroach upon the province of grammarians; and to engage in diſputes of words, while they imagine, that they are handling controverſies of the deepeſt importance and concern. It was in order to avoid altercations, ſo frivolous and endleſs, that I endeavoured to ſtate with the utmoſt caution the object of our preſent enquiry; and propoſed ſimply to collect on the one hand, a liſt of thoſe mental qualities which are the object of love or eſteem, and form a part of perſonal merit, and on the other hand, a catalogue of thoſe qualities, which are the object of cenſure or reproach, and which detract from the character of the perſon, poſſeſſed of them; ſubjoining ſome reflections concerning the origin of theſe ſentiments of praiſe or blame. On all occaſions, where there might ariſe the leaſt heſitation, I avoided the terms *virtue* and *vice*; becauſe ſome of thoſe qualities, which I claſſed among the objects of praiſe, receive, in the English language, the appellation

of

of *talents*, rather than of virtues; as ſome of the blameable or cenſurable qualities are often called *defects* rather than vices. It may now, perhaps, be expected, that, before we conclude this moral enquiry, we ſhould ſeparate exactly the one from the other; ſhould mark the preciſe boundaries of virtues and talents, vices and defects; and ſhould explain the reaſon and origin of that diſtinction. But in order to excuſe myſelf from this undertaking, which would, at laſt, only prove a grammatical enquiry, I ſhall ſubjoin the four following reflections, which ſhall contain all that I intend to ſay on the preſent ſubject.

Firſt, I do not find, that in the ENGLISH, or any other modern tongue, the boundaries are exactly fixed between virtue and talents, vices and defects, or that a preciſe definition can be given of the one as contradiſtinguiſhed from the other. Were we to ſay, for inſtance, that the eſteemable qualities alone, which are voluntary, are entitled to the appellation of virtues; we ſhould ſoon recollect the qualities of courage, equanimity, patience, ſelf-command; with many others, which almoſt every language claſſes under this appellation, though they depend little or not at all on our choice. Should we affirm, that the qualities alone, which prompt us to act our part in ſociety, are entitled to that honourable diſtinction; it muſt immediately occur, that theſe are in-

deed the moſt valuable qualities, and are commonly denominated the *ſocial* virtues; but that this very epithet ſuppoſes, that there are alſo virtues of another ſpecies. Should we lay hold of the diſtinction between *intellectual* and *moral* endowments, and affirm the laſt alone to be the real and genuine virtues, becauſe they alone lead to action; we ſhould find, that many of thoſe qualities, uſually called intellectual virtues, ſuch as prudence, penetration, diſcernment, diſcretion, had alſo a conſiderable influence on conduct. The diſtinction between the *heart* and the *head* may alſo be adopted: The qualities of the firſt may be defined ſuch as in their immediate exertion are accompanied with a feeling or ſentiment; and theſe alone may be called the genuine virtues: But induſtry, frugality, temperance, ſecrecy, perſeverance, and many other laudable powers or habits, generally ſtyled virtues, are exerted without any immediate ſentiment in the perſon poſſeſſed of them; and are only known to him by their effects. It is fortunate, amidſt all this ſeeming perplexity, that the queſtion being merely verbal, cannot poſſibly be of any importance. A moral, philoſophical diſcourſe needs not enter into all theſe caprices of language, which are ſo variable in different dialects, and in different ages of the ſame dialect. But on the whole, it ſeems to me, that, though it is always allowed, that there are virtues of many different kinds, yet, when a man is called *virtuous*, or is denominated

nominated a man of virtue, we chiefly regard his ſocial qualities, which are, indeed, the moſt valuable. It is, at the ſame time, certain, that any remarkable defect in courage, temperance, œconomy, induſtry, underſtanding, dignity of mind, would bereave even a very good-natured, honeſt man of this honourable appellation. Who did ever ſay, except by way of irony, that ſuch a one was a man of great virtue, but an egregious blockhead?

But, *ſecondly*, it is no wonder, that languages ſhould not be very preciſe in marking the boundaries between virtue and talents, vices and defects; ſince there is ſo little diſtinction made in our internal eſtimation of them. It ſeems certain, that the *ſentiment* of conſcious worth, the ſelf-ſatisfaction proceeding from a review of a man's own conduct and character; it ſeems certain, I ſay, that this ſentiment, which, though the moſt common of all others, has no proper name in our language *, ariſes from the endowments of courage and capacity, induſtry and ingenuity, as well as from any other mental excellencies. Who, on the other hand, is not deeply mortified with reflecting on his own folly and diſſoluteneſs, and feels not a ſecret ſting or compunction, whenever his memory preſents any paſt occurrence, where he behaved with ſtupidity or ill-manners? No time can

* See NOTE [Z].

efface the cruel ideas of a man's own fooliſh conduct, or of affronts, which cowardice or impudence has brought upon him. They ſtill haunt his ſolitary hours, damp his moſt aſpiring thoughts, and ſhow him, even to himſelf, in the moſt contemptible and moſt odious colours imaginable.

What is there too we are more anxious to conceal from others than ſuch blunders, infirmities, and meanneſſes, or more dread to have expoſed by raillery and ſatyre? And is not the chief object of vanity, our bravery or learning, our wit or breeding, our eloquence or addreſs, our taſte or ability? Theſe we diſplay with care, if not with oſtentation; and commonly ſhow more ambition of excelling in them, than even in the ſocial virtues themſelves, which are, in reality, of ſuch ſuperior excellence. Good-nature and honeſty, eſpecially the latter, are ſo indiſpenſibly required, that, though the greateſt cenſure attends any violation of theſe duties, no eminent praiſe follows ſuch common inſtances of them, as ſeem eſſential to the ſupport of human ſociety. And hence the reaſon, in my opinion, why, though men often extol ſo liberally the qualities of their heart, they are ſhy of commending the endowments of their head: Becauſe the latter virtues, being ſuppoſed more rare and extraordinary, are obſerved to be the more uſual objects of pride and

ſelf-

ſelf-conceit; and when boaſted of, beget a ſtrong ſuſpicion of theſe ſentiments.

It is hard to tell, whether you hurt a man's character moſt by calling him a knave or a coward, and whether a beaſtly glutton or drunkard be not as odious and contemptible, as a ſelfiſh, ungenerous miſer. Give me my choice, and I would rather, for my own happineſs and ſelf enjoyment, have a friendly, humane heart than poſſeſs all the other virtues of DEMOSTHENES and PHILIP united: But I would rather paſs with the world for one endowed with extenſive genius and intrepid courage, and ſhould thence expect ſtronger inſtances of general applauſe and admiration. The figure which a man makes in life, the reception which he meets with in company, the eſteem paid him by his acquaintance; all theſe advantages depend as much upon his good ſenſe and judgment, as upon any other part of his character. Had a man the beſt intentions in the world, and were the farthest removed from all injuſtice and violence, he would never be able to make himſelf be much regarded, without a moderate ſhare, at leaſt, of parts and underſtanding.

What is it then we can here diſpute about? If ſenſe and courage, temperance and induſtry, wiſdom and knowledge confeſſedly form a conſiderable part of *perſonal merit*: If a man poſſeſſed of theſe qua-

lities is both better ſatisfied with himſelf, and better entitled to the good-will, eſteem, and ſervices of others, than one entirely devoid of them; if, in ſhort, the *ſentiments* be ſimilar, which ariſe from theſe endowments and from the ſocial virtues; is there any reaſon for being ſo extremely ſcrupulous about a *word*, or diſputing whether they are entitled to the denomination of virtue? It may, indeed, be pretended, that the ſentiment of approbation, which thoſe accompliſhments produce, beſides its being *inferior*, is alſo ſomewhat *different* from that, which attends the virtues of juſtice and humanity. But this ſeems not a ſufficient reaſon for ranking them entirely under different claſſes and appellations. The character of CÆSAR and that of CATO, as drawn by SALLUST, are both of them virtuous, in the ſtricteſt and moſt limited ſenſe of the word; but in a different way: Nor are the ſentiments entirely the ſame, which ariſe from them. The one produces love; the other, eſteem: The one is amiable; the other awful: We ſhould wiſh to meet the one character in a friend; the other we ſhould be ambitious of in ourſelves. In like manner the approbation, which attends temperance or induſtry or frugality, may be ſomewhat different from that which is paid to the ſocial virtues, without making them entirely of a different ſpecies. And, indeed, we may obſerve, that theſe endowments, no more than the other virtues, produce not, all of them, the

ſame

ſame kind of approbation. Good ſenſe and genius beget eſteem and regard: Wit and humour excite love and affection *.

Moſt people, I believe, will naturally, without premeditation, aſſent to the definition of the elegant and judicious poet.

> Virtue (for mere good-nature is a fool)
> Is ſenſe and ſpirit with humanity †.

What pretenſions has a man to our generous aſſiſtance or good-offices, who has diſſipated his wealth in profuſe expences, idle vanities, chimerical projects, diſſolute pleaſures, or extravagant gaming? Theſe vices (for we ſcruple not to call them ſuch) bring miſery unpitied, and contempt on every one addicted to them.

ACHÆUS, a wiſe and prudent prince, fell into a fatal ſnare, which coſt him his crown and life, after having uſed every reaſonable precaution to guard himſelf againſt it. On that account, ſays the hiſtorian, he is a juſt object of regard and compaſſion; His betrayers alone of hatred and contempt ‡.

* See NOTE [AA].

† The art of preſerving health. Book 4.

‡ POLYBIUS, lib. viii. cap. 2.

The precipitate flight and improvident negligence of POMPEY, at the beginning of the civil wars, appeared ſuch notorious blunders to CICERO, as quite palled his friendſhip towards that great man. *In the ſame manner*, ſays he, *as want of cleanlineſs, decency, or diſcretion in a miſtreſs are found to alienate our affections.* For ſo he expreſſes himſelf, where he talks, not in the character of a philoſopher, but in that of a ſtateſman and man of the world, to his friend ATTICUS *.

But the ſame CICERO, in imitation of all the ancient moraliſts, when he reaſons as a philoſopher, enlarges very much his ideas of virtue, and comprehends every laudable quality or endowment of the mind, under that honourable appellation. This leads to the *third* reflection, which we propoſed to make, *viz.* that the ancient moraliſts, the beſt models, made no material diſtinction among the different ſpecies of mental endowments and defects, but treated all alike under the appellation of virtues and vices, and made them indiſcriminately the object of their moral reaſonings. The *prudence* explained in CICERO's *Offices* †, is that ſagacity, which leads to the diſcovery of truth, and preſerves us from error and miſtake. *Magnanimity*, *temperance*, *decency*, are there alſo at large diſcourſed of. And as that elo-

* Lib. ix. epiſt. 10. † Lib. i. cap. 6.

quent

quent moraliſt followed the common received diviſion of the four cardinal virtues, our ſocial duties form but one head, in the general diſtribution of his ſubject *.

We need only peruſe the titles of chapters in ARISTOTLE's Ethics to be convinced, that he ranks courage, temperance, magnificence, magnanimity, modeſty, prudence, and a manly freedom, among the virtues, as well as juſtice and friendſhip.

To *ſuſtain* and to *abſtain*, that is, to be patient and continent, appeared to ſome of the ancients, a ſummary comprehenſion of all morals.

EPICTETUS has ſcarcely ever mentioned the ſentiment of humanity and compaſſion, but in order to put his diſciples on their guard againſt it. The virtue of the *Stoics* ſeems to conſiſt chiefly in a firm temper and a ſound underſtanding. With them, as with SOLOMON and the eaſtern moraliſts, folly and wiſdom are equivalent to vice and virtue.

Men will praiſe thee, ſays DAVID †, when thou doſt well unto thyſelf. I hate a wiſe man, ſays the GREEK poet, who is not wiſe to himſelf ‡.

* See NOTE [BB].

† Pſalm 49th.

‡ Μισω σοφιςην ὁςις μη αυτῳ σοφος. EURIPIDES.

PLUTARCH

PLUTARCH is no more cramped by ſyſtems in his philoſophy than in his hiſtory. Where he compares the great men of GREECE and ROME, he fairly ſets in oppoſition all their blemiſhes and accompliſhments of whatever kind, and omits nothing conſiderable, which can either depreſs or exalt their characters. His moral diſcourſes contain the ſame free and natural cenſure of men and manners.

The character of HANNIBAL, as drawn by LIVY *, is eſteemed partial, but allows him many eminent virtues. Never was there a genius, ſays the hiſtorian, more equally fitted for thoſe oppoſite offices of command and obedience; and it were, therefore, difficult to determine whether he rendered himſelf *dearer* to the general or to the army. To none would HASDRUBAL entruſt more willingly the conduct of any dangerous enterprize; under none, did the ſoldiers diſcover more courage and confidence. Great boldneſs in facing danger; great prudence in the midſt of it. No labour could fatigue his body or ſubdue his mind. Cold and heat were indifferent to him: Meat and drink he ſought as ſupplies to the neceſſities of nature, not as gratifications of his voluptuous appetites: Waking or reſt he uſed indiſcriminately, by night or by day.——Theſe great VIRTUES were balanced by great VICES:

* Lib. xxi. cap. 4.

Inhuman

Inhuman cruelty; perfidy more than *punic*; no truth, no faith, no regard to oaths, promiſes or religion.

The character of ALEXANDER the ſixth, to be found in GUICCIARDIN *, is pretty ſimilar, but juſter; and is a proof, that even the moderns, where they ſpeak naturally, hold the ſame language with the ancients. In this pope, ſays he, there was a ſingular capacity and judgment: Admirable prudence; a wonderful talent of perſuaſion; and in all momentous enterprizes, a diligence and dexterity incredible. But theſe *virtues* were infinitely overbalanced by his *vices*; no faith, no religion, inſatiable avarice, exorbitant ambition, and a more than barbarous cruelty.

POLYBIUS †, reprehending TIMÆUS for his partiality againſt AGATHOCLES, whom he himſelf allows to be the moſt cruel and impious of all tyrants, ſays: If he took refuge in SYRACUSE, as aſſerted by that hiſtorian, flying the dirt and ſmoke and toil of his former profeſſion of a potter; and if proceeding from ſuch ſlender beginnings, he became maſter, in a little time, of all SICILY; brought the CARTHAGINIAN ſtate into the utmoſt danger; and at laſt died in old age, and in poſſeſſion of kingly dignity:

* Lib. i. † Lib. xii.

Muſt

Muſt he not be allowed ſomething prodigious and extraordinary, and to have poſſeſſed great talents and capacity for buſineſs and action? His hiſtorian, therefore, ought not to have alone related what tended to his reproach and infamy; but alſo what might redound to his PRAISE and HONOUR.

In general, we may obſerve, that the diſtinction of voluntary or involuntary was little regarded by the ancients in their moral reaſonings; where they frequently treated the queſtion as very doubtful, *whether virtue could be taught or not* *? They juſtly conſidered, that cowardice, meanneſs, levity, anxiety, impatience, folly, and many other qualities of the mind, might appear ridiculous and deformed, contemptible and odious, though independent of the will. Nor could it be ſuppoſed, at all times, in every man's power to attain every kind of mental, more than of exterior beauty.

And here there recurs the *fourth* reflection which I propoſed to make, in ſuggeſting the reaſon, why modern philoſophers have often followed a courſe, in their moral enquiries, ſo different from that of the ancients. In latter times, philoſophy of all kinds, eſpecially ethics, have been more cloſely united with

* Vid. PLATO in MENONE, SENECA *de otio ſap.* cap. 31. So alſo HORACE, *Virtutem doctrina paret, naturane donet.* Epiſt. lib. i. ep. 18. ÆSCHINES SOCRATICUS. Dial. 1.

theology

theology than ever they were obſerved to be among the Heathens; and as this latter ſcience admits of no terms of compoſition, but bends every branch of knowledge to its own purpoſe, without much regard to the phænomena of nature, or to the unbiaſſed ſentiments of the mind, hence reaſoning, and even language, have been warped from their natural courſe, and diſtinctions have been endeavoured to be eſtabliſhed, where the difference of the objects was, in a manner, imperceptible. Philoſophers, or rather divines under that diſguiſe, treating all morals, as on a like footing with civil laws, guarded by the ſanctions of reward and puniſhment, were neceſſarily led to render this circumſtance, of *voluntary* or *involuntary*, the foundation of their whole theory. Every one may employ *terms* in what ſenſe he pleaſes: But this in the mean time, muſt be allowed, that *ſentiments* are every day experienced of blame and praiſe, which have objects beyond the dominion of the will or choice, and of which it behoves us, if not as moraliſts, as ſpeculative philoſophers at leaſt, to give ſome ſatisfactory theory and explication.

A blemiſh, a fault, a vice, a crime; theſe expreſſions ſeem to denote different degrees of cenſure and diſapprobation; which are, however, all of them, at the bottom, pretty nearly of the ſame kind or ſpecies. The explication of one will lead us eaſily

eaſily into a juſt conception of the others; and it is of greater conſequence to attend to things than to verbal denominations. That we owe a duty to ourſelves is confeſſed even in the moſt vulgar ſyſtem of morals; and it muſt be of conſequence to examine that duty, in order to ſee, whether it bears any analogy to that which we owe to ſociety. It is probable, that the approbation, attending the obſervance of both, is of a ſimilar nature, and ariſes from ſimilar principles; whatever appellation we may give to either of theſe excellencies.

A

DIALOGUE.

MY friend, PALAMEDES, who is as great a rambler in his principles as in his perſon, and who has run over, by ſtudy and travel, almoſt every region of the intellectual and material world, ſurprized me lately with an account of a nation, with whom, he told me, he had paſſed a conſiderable part of his life, and whom, he found, in the main, a people extremely civilized and intelligent.

There is a ſtate, ſaid he, in the world, called FOURLI, no matter for its longitude or latitude, whoſe ways of thinking, in many things, particularly in morals, are diametrically oppoſite to ours. When I came among them, I found that I muſt ſubmit to double pains; firſt to learn the meaning of the terms in their language, and then to know the import of thoſe terms, and the praiſe or blame attached to them. After a word had been explained to me, and the character, which it expreſſed, had been deſcribed, I concluded, that ſuch an epithet muſt

muſt neceſſarily be the greateſt reproach in the world; and was extremely ſurprized to find one in a public company, apply it to a perſon, with whom he lived in the ſtricteſt intimacy and friendſhip. *You fancy*, ſaid I, one day, to an acquaintance, *that* CHANGUIS *is your mortal enemy: I love to extinguiſh quarrels, and I muſt, therefore, tell you, that I heard him talk of you in the moſt advantageous manner.* But to my great aſtoniſhment, when I repeated CHANGUIS's words, though I had both remembered and underſtood them perfectly, I found, that they were taken for the moſt mortal affront, and that I had very innocently rendered the breach between theſe perſons altogether irreparable.

As it was my fortune to come among this people on a very advantageous footing, I was immediately introduced to the beſt company; and being deſired to live with ALCHEIC, I readily accepted his invitation; as I found him univerſally eſteemed for his perſonal merit, and indeed regarded by every one in FOURLI, as a perfect character.

One evening he invited me, as an amuſement, to bear him company in a ſerenade, which he intended to give GULKI, with whom, he told me, he was extremely enamoured; and I ſoon found his taſte was not ſingular: For we met many of his rivals, who had come on the ſame errand. I very naturally concluded,

concluded, that this miſtreſs of his muſt be one of the fineſt women in town; and I already felt a ſecret inclination to ſee her, and be acquainted with her. But as the moon began to riſe, I was much ſurpriſed to find, that we were in the midſt of the univerſity, where GULKI ſtudied: And I was ſomewhat aſhamed for having attended my friend, on ſuch an errand.

I was told afterwards, that ALCHEIC's choice of GULKI was very much approved of by all the good company in town; and that it was expected, while he gratified his own paſſion, he would perform to that young man the ſame good office, which he had himſelf owed to ELCOUF. It ſeems ALCHEIC had been very handſome in his youth, had been courted by many lovers; but had beſtowed his favours chiefly on the ſage ELCOUF; to whom he was ſuppoſed to owe, in a great meaſure, the aſtoniſhing progreſs which he had made in philoſophy and virtue.

It gave me ſome ſurprize, that ALCHEIC's wife (who by-the-bye happened alſo to be his ſiſter) was no wiſe ſcandalized at this ſpecies of infidelity.

Much about the ſame time I diſcovered (for it was not attempted to be kept a ſecret from me or any body) that ALCHEIC was a murderer and a parricide, and had put to death an innocent perſon,

the moſt nearly connected with him, and whom he was obliged to protect and defend by all the ties of nature and humanity. When I aſked, with all the caution and deference imaginable, what was his motive for this action; he replied coolly, that he was not then ſo much at eaſe in his circumſtances as he is at preſent, and that he had acted, in that particular, by the advice of all his friends.

Having heard ALCHEIC's virtue ſo extremely celebrated, I pretended to join in the general voice of acclamation, and only aſked, by way of curioſity, as a ſtranger, which of all his noble actions was moſt highly applauded; and I ſoon found, that all ſentiments were united in giving the preference to the aſſaſſination of USBEK. This USBEK had been to the laſt moment ALCHEIC's intimate friend, had laid many high obligations upon him, had even ſaved his life on a certain occaſion, and had, by his will, which was found after the murder, made him heir to a conſiderable part of his fortune. ALCHEIC, it ſeems, conſpired with about twenty or thirty more, moſt of them alſo USBEK's friends; and falling all together, on that unhappy man, when he was not aware, they had torne him with a hundred wounds; and given him that reward for all his paſt favours and obligations. USBEK, ſaid the general voice of the people, had many great and good qualities: His very vices were ſhining, magnificent, and generous:

nerous. But this action of ALCHEIC ſets him far above USBEK in the eyes of all judges of merit; and is one of the nobleſt that ever perhaps the ſun ſhone upon.

Another part of ALCHEIC's conduct, which I alſo found highly applauded, was his behaviour towards CALISH, with whom he was joined in a project or undertaking of ſome importance. CALISH, being a paſſionate man, gave ALCHEIC, one day, a ſound drubbing; which he took very patiently, waited the return of CALISH's good humour, kept ſtill a fair correſpondence with him; and by that means brought the affair, in which they were joined, to a happy iſſue, and gained himſelf immortal honour by his remarkable temper and moderation.

I have lately received a letter from a correſpondent in FOURLI, by which I learn, that ſince my departure, ALCHEIC, falling into a bad ſtate of health, has fairly hanged himſelf; and has died univerſally regretted and applauded in that country. So virtuous and noble a life, ſays each FOURLIAN, could not be better crowned than by ſo noble an end; and ALCHEIC has proved by this, as well as by all his other actions, what was his conſtant principle during his life, and what he boaſted of near his laſt moments, that a wiſe man is ſcarcely inferior to the great god, VITZLI. This is the name of the ſupreme deity among the FOURLIANS.

The notions of this people, continued PALAMEDES, are as extraordinary with regard to good-manners and ſociableneſs, as with regard to morals. My friend ALCHEIC formed once a party for my entertainment, compoſed of all the prime wits and philoſophers of FOURLI; and each of us brought his meſs along with him to the place where we aſſembled. I obſerved one of them to be worſe provided than the reſt, and offered him a ſhare of my meſs, which happened to be a roaſted pullet: And I could not but remark, that he and all the reſt of the company ſmiled at my ſimplicity. I was told, that ALCHEIC had once ſo much intereſt with his club as to prevail with them to eat in common, and that he had made uſe of an artifice to that purpoſe. He perſuaded thoſe, whom he obſerved to be *worſt* provided, to offer their meſs to the company; after which, the others, who had brought more delicate fare, were aſhamed not to make the ſame offer. This is regarded as ſo extraordinary an event, that it has ſince, as I learn, been recorded in the hiſtory of ALCHEIC's life, compoſed by one of the greateſt geniuſes of FOURLI.

Pray, ſays I, PALAMEDES, when you was at FOURLI, did you alſo learn the art of turning your friends into ridicule, by telling them ſtrange ſtories, and then laughing at them, if they believed you. I aſſure you, replied he, had I been diſpoſed to learn ſuch a leſſon, there was no place in the world more

proper. My friend, ſo often mentioned, did nothing, from morning to night, but ſneer, and banter, and rally; and you could ſcarcely ever diſtinguiſh, whether he was in jeſt or earneſt. But you think then, that my ſtory is improbable; and that I have uſed, or rather abuſed the privilege of a traveller. To be ſure, ſays I, you were but in jeſt. Such barbarous and ſavage manners are not only incompatible with a civilized, intelligent people, ſuch as you ſaid theſe were; but are ſcarcely compatible with human nature. They exceed all we ever read of, among the MINGRELIANS, and TOPINAMBOUES.

Have a care, cried he, have a care! You are not aware that you are ſpeaking blaſphemy, and are abuſing your favourites, the GREEKS, eſpecially the ATHENIANS, whom I have couched all along, under theſe bizarre names I employed. If you conſider aright, there is not one ſtroke of the foregoing character, which might not be found in the man of higheſt merit at ATHENS, without diminiſhing in the leaſt from the brightneſs of his character. The amours of the GREEKS, their marriages *, and the expoſing of their children cannot but ſtrike you im-

* The laws of ATHENS allowed a man to marry his ſiſter by the father. SOLON's law forbid pæderaſty to ſlaves, as being an act of too great dignity for ſuch mean perſons.

mediately. The death of USBEK is an exact counter-part to that of CÆSAR.

All to a trifle, ſaid I, interrupting him: You did not mention that USBEK was an uſurper.

I did not, replied he; leſt you ſhould diſcover the parallel I aimed at. But even adding this circumſtance, we ſhould make no ſcruple, according to our ſentiments of morals, to denominate BRUTUS, and CASSIUS, ungrateful traitors and aſſaſſins: Tho' you know, that they are, perhaps, the higheſt characters of all antiquity; and the ATHENIANS erected ſtatues to them; which they placed near thoſe of HARMODIUS and ARISTOGITON, their own deliverers. And if you think this circumſtance, which you mention, ſo material to abſolve theſe patriots, I ſhall compenſate it by another, not mentioned, which will equally aggravate their crime. A few days before the execution of their fatal purpoſe, they all ſwore fealty to CÆSAR; and proteſting to hold his perſon ever ſacred, they touched the altar with thoſe hands, which they had already armed for his deſtruction *.

I need not put you in mind of the famous and applauded ſtory of THEMISTOCLES, and of his pa-

* APPIAN. Bell. Civ. lib. iii. SUETONIUS in vita CÆSARIS.

tience

tience towards EURYBIADES, the SPARTAN, his commanding officer, who, heated by a debate, lifted his cane to him in a council of war, (the ſame thing as if he had cudgelled him) *Strike!* cries the ATHENIAN, *ſtrike! but hear me.*

You are too good a ſcholar not to diſcover the ironical SOCRATES and his ATHENIAN club in my laſt ſtory; and you would certainly obſerve, that it is exactly copied from XENOPHON, with a variation only of the names *. And I think I have fairly made it appear, that an ATHENIAN man of merit might be ſuch a one as with us would paſs for inceſtuous, a parricide, an aſſaſſin, an ungrateful, perjured traitor, and ſomething elſe too abominable to be named; not to mention his ruſticity and ill-manners. And having lived in this manner, his death might be entirely ſuitable: He might conclude the ſcene by a deſperate act of ſelf-murder, and die with the moſt abſurd blaſphemies in his mouth. And notwithſtanding all this, he ſhall have ſtatues, if not altars, erected to his memory; poems and orations ſhall be compoſed in his praiſe; great ſects ſhall be proud of calling themſelves by his name; and the moſt diſtant poſterity ſhall blindly continue their admiration: Though were ſuch a

* Mem. Soc. lib. iii. ſub fine.

one to ariſe among themſelves, they would juſtly regard him with horror and execration.

I might have been aware, replied I, of your artifice. You ſeem to take pleaſure in this topic; and are indeed the only man I ever knew, who was well acquainted with the ancients, and did not extremely admire them. But inſtead of attacking their philoſophy, their eloquence, or poetry, the uſual ſubjects of controverſy between us, you now ſeem to impeach their morals, and accuſe them of ignorance in a ſcience, which is the only one, in my opinion, in which they are not ſurpaſſed by the moderns. Geometry, phyſics, aſtronomy, anatomy, botany, geography, navigation; in theſe we juſtly claim the ſuperiority: But what have we to oppoſe to their moraliſts? Your repreſentation of things is fallacious. You have no indulgence for the manners and cuſtoms of different ages. Would you try a GREEK or ROMAN by the common law of ENGLAND? Hear him defend himſelf by his own maxims; and then pronounce.

There are no manners ſo innocent or reaſonable, which may not be rendered odious or ridiculous, if meaſured by a ſtandard, unknown to the perſons; eſpecially, if you employ a little art or eloquence, in aggravating ſome circumſtances, and extenuating others,

others, as beſt ſuits the purpoſe of your diſcourſe. All theſe artifices may eaſily be retorted on you. Could I inform the ATHENIANS, for inſtance, that there was a nation, in which adultery, both active and paſſive, ſo to ſpeak, was in the higheſt vogue and eſteem: In which every man of education choſe for his miſtreſs a married woman, the wife, perhaps, of his friend and companion; and valued himſelf upon theſe infamous conqueſts, as much as if he had been ſeveral times a conqueror in boxing or wreſtling at the *Olympic* game: In which every man, alſo took a pride in his tameneſs and facility with regard to his own wife, and was glad to make friends or gain intereſt by allowing her to proſtitute her charms; and even, without any ſuch motive, give her full liberty and indulgence: I aſk, what ſentiments the ATHENIANS would entertain of ſuch a people; they who never mentioned the crime of adultery but in conjunction with robbery and poiſoning? Which would they admire moſt, the villany or the meanneſs of ſuch a conduct?

Should I add, that the ſame people were as proud of their ſlavery and dependance as the ATHENIANS of their liberty; and though a man among them were oppreſſed, diſgraced, impoveriſhed, inſulted, or impriſoned by the tyrant, he would ſtill regard it as the higheſt merit to love, ſerve, and obey him; and even to die for his ſmalleſt glory or ſatisfaction:

Theſe

Theſe noble GREEKS would probably aſk me, whether I ſpoke of a human ſociety, or of ſome inferior, ſervile ſpecies.

It was then I might inform my ATHENIAN audience, that theſe people, however, wanted not ſpirit and bravery. If a man, ſays I, though their intimate friend, ſhould throw out, in a private company, a raillery againſt them, nearly approaching any of thoſe, with which your generals and demagogues every day regale each other, in the face of the whole city, they never can forgive him; but in order to revenge themſelves, they oblige him immediately to run them through the body, or be himſelf murdered. And if a man, who is an abſolute ſtranger to them, ſhould deſire them, at the peril of their own life, to cut the throat of their boſom companion, they immediately obey, and think themſelves highly obliged and honoured by the commiſſion. Theſe are their maxims of honour: This is their favourite morality.

But though ſo ready to draw their ſword againſt their friends and countrymen; no diſgrace, no infamy, no pain, no poverty will ever engage theſe people to turn the point of it againſt their own breaſt. A man of rank would row in the gallies, would beg his bread, would languiſh in priſon, would ſuffer any tortures; and ſtill preſerve his wretched life.

Rather than eſcape his enemies by a generous contempt of death, he would infamouſly receive the ſame death from his enemies, aggravated by their triumphant inſults, and by the moſt exquiſite ſufferings.

It is very uſual too, continue I, among this people to erect jails, where every art of plaguing and tormenting the unhappy priſoners is carefully ſtudied and practiſed: And in theſe jails it is uſual for a parent voluntarily to ſhut up ſeveral of his children; in order, that another child, whom he owns to have no greater or rather leſs merit than the reſt, may enjoy his whole fortune, and wallow in every kind of voluptuouſneſs and pleaſure. Nothing ſo virtuous in their opinion as this barbarous partiality.

But what is more ſingular in this whimſical nation, ſay I to the ATHENIANS, is, that a frolic of yours during the SATURNALIA *, when the ſlaves are ſerved by their maſters, is ſeriouſly continued by them through the whole year, and through the whole courſe of their lives; accompanied too with ſome circumſtances, which ſtill farther augment the abſurdity and ridicule. Your ſport only elevates for a few days thoſe whom fortune has thrown down,

* The GREEKS kept the feaſt of SATURN or CHRONUS, as well as the ROMANS. See LUCIAN, Epiſt. SATURN.

and

and whom ſhe too, in ſport, may really elevate for ever above you: But this nation gravely exalts thoſe, whom nature has ſubjected to them, and whoſe inferiority and infirmities are abſolutely incurable. The women, though without virtue, are their maſters and ſovereigns: Theſe they reverence, praiſe and magnify: To theſe, they pay the higheſt deference and reſpect: And in all places and at all times, the ſuperiority of the females is readily acknowledged and ſubmitted to by every one, who has the leaſt pretenſions to education and politeneſs. Scarce any crime would be ſo univerſally deteſted as an infraction of this rule.

You need go no further, replied PALAMEDES; I can eaſily conjecture the people whom you aim at. The ſtrokes, with which you have painted them, are pretty juſt; and yet you muſt acknowledge, that ſcarce any people are to be found, either in ancient or modern times, whoſe national character is, upon the whole, leſs liable to exception. But I give you thanks for helping me out with my argument. I had no intention of exalting the moderns at the expence of the ancients. I only meant to repreſent the uncertainty of all theſe judgments concerning characters; and to convince you, that faſhion, vogue, cuſtom and law, were the chief foundation of all moral determinations. The ATHENIANS ſurely, were a civilized, intelligent people, if ever there

there was one; and yet their man of merit might, in this age, be held in horror and execration. The FRENCH are alſo, without doubt, a very civilized, intelligent people; and yet their man of merit might, with the ATHENIANS, be an object of the higheſt contempt and ridicule, and even hatred. And what renders the matter more extraordinary: Theſe two people are ſuppoſed to be the moſt ſimilar in their national character of any in ancient and modern times; and while the ENGLISH flatter themſelves that they reſemble the ROMANS, their neighbours on the continent draw the parallel between themſelves and thoſe polite GREEKS. What wide difference, therefore, in the ſentiments of morals, muſt be found between civilized nations and Barbarians, or between nations whoſe characters have little in common? How ſhall we pretend to fix a ſtandard for judgments of this nature?

By tracing matters, replied I, a little higher, and examining the firſt principles, which each nation eſtabliſhes, of blame or cenſure. The RHINE flows north, the RHONE ſouth; yet both ſpring from the *ſame* mountain, and are alſo actuated, in their oppoſite directions, by the *ſame* principle of gravity. The different inclinations of the ground, on which they run, cauſe all the difference of their courſes.

In how many circumſtances would an ATHENIAN and a FRENCH man of merit certainly reſemble each other?

other? Good ſenſe, knowledge, wit, eloquence, humanity, fidelity, truth, juſtice, courage, temperance, conſtancy, dignity of mind: Theſe you have all omitted; in order to inſiſt only the points, in which they may, by accident, differ. Very well: I am willing to comply with you; and ſhall endeavour to account for theſe differences from the moſt univerſal, eſtabliſhed principles of morals.

The GREEK loves, I care not to examine more particularly. I ſhall only obſerve, that, however blameable, they aroſe from a very innocent cauſe, the frequency of the gymnaſtic exerciſes among that people; and were recommended, though abſurdly, as the ſource of friendſhip, ſympathy, mutual attachment, and fidelity *; qualities eſteemed in all nations and all ages.

The marriage of half-brothers and ſiſters ſeems no great difficulty. Love between the nearer relations is contrary to reaſon and public utility; but the preciſe point, where we are to ſtop, can ſcarcely be determined by natural reaſon; and is therefore a very proper ſubject of municipal law or cuſtom. If the ATHENIANS went a little too far on the one ſide, the canon law has ſurely puſhed matters a great way into the other extreme †.

* PLAT. ſymp. p. 182. Ex edit. SERR.

† See Enquiry, Sect. IV.

Had

Had you aſked a parent at ATHENS, why he bereaved his child of that life, which he had ſo lately given it. It is becauſe I love it, he would reply; and regard the poverty which it muſt inherit from me, as a greater evil than death, which it is not capable of dreading, feeling, or reſenting *.

How is public liberty, the moſt valuable of all bleſſings, to be recovered from the hands of an uſurper or tyrant, if his power ſhields him from public rebellion, and our ſcruples from private vengeance? That his crime is capital by law, you acknowledge: And muſt the higheſt aggravation of his crime, the putting himſelf above law, form his full ſecurity? You can reply nothing, but by ſhowing the great inconveniencies of aſſaſſination; which could any one have proved clearly to the ancients, he had reformed their ſentiments in this particular.

Again, to caſt your eye on the picture which I have drawn of modern manners; there is almoſt as great difficulty, I acknowledge, to juſtify FRENCH as GREEK gallantry; except only, that the former is much more natural and agreeable than the latter. But our neighbours, it ſeems, have reſolved to ſacrifice ſome of the domeſtic to the ſociable pleaſures;

* PLUT. de amore prolis, ſub fine.

and

and to prefer eaſe, freedom, and an open commerce to a ſtrict fidelity and conſtancy. Theſe ends are both good, and are ſomewhat difficult to reconcile; nor need we be ſurprized, if the cuſtoms of nations incline too much, ſometimes to the one ſide, ſometimes to the other.

The moſt inviolable attachment to the laws of our country is every where acknowledged a capital virtue; and where the people are not ſo happy, as to have any other legiſlature but a ſingle perſon, the ſtricteſt loyalty is, in that caſe, the trueſt patriotiſm.

Nothing ſurely can be more abſurd and barbarous than the practice of duelling; but thoſe, who juſtify it, ſay, that it begets civility and good manners. And a dueliſt, you may obſerve, always values himſelf upon his courage, his ſenſe of honour, his fidelity and friendſhip; qualities, which are here indeed very oddly directed, but which have been eſteemed univerſally, ſince the foundation of the world.

Have the gods forbid ſelf-murder? An ATHENIAN allows, that it ought to be forborn. Has the Deity permitted it? A FRENCHMAN allows, that death is preferable to pain and infamy.

You ſee then, continued I, that the principles, upon which men reaſon in morals are always the ſame;

ſame; though the concluſions which they draw are often very different That they all reaſon aright with regard to this ſubject, more than with regard to any other, it is not incumbent on any moraliſt to ſhow. It is ſufficient, that the original principles of cenſure or blame are uniform, and that erroneous concluſions can be corrected by ſounder reaſoning and larger experience. Though many ages have elapſed ſince the fall of GREECE and ROME; though many changes have arrived in religion, language, laws, and cuſtoms; none of theſe revolutions has ever produced any conſiderable innovation in the primary ſentiments of morals, more than in thoſe of external beauty. Some minute differences, perhaps, may be obſerved in both. HORACE * celebrates a low forehead, and ANACREON joined eye-brows †: But the APOLLO and the VENUS of antiquity are ſtill our models for male and female beauty; in like manner as the character of SCIPIO continues our ſtandard for the glory of heroes, and that of CORNELIA for the honour of matrons.

It appears, that there never was any quality, recommended by any one, as a virtue or moral ex-

* Epiſt. lib. i. epiſt. 7. Alſo lib. i. ode 3.

† Ode 28. PETRONIUS (cap. 86.) joins both theſe circumſtances as beauties.

cellence, but on account of its being *uſeful*, or *agreeable* to a man *himſelf*, or to *others*. For what other reaſon can there ever be aſſigned for praiſe or approbation? Or where would be the ſenſe of extolling a *good* character or action, which, at the ſame time, is allowed to be *good for nothing*? All the differences, therefore, in morals, may be reduced to this one general foundation, and may be accounted for by the different views, which people take of theſe circumſtances.

Sometimes men differ in their judgment about the uſefulneſs of any habit or action: Sometimes alſo the peculiar circumſtances of things render one moral quality more uſeful than others, and give it a peculiar preference.

It is not ſurpriſing, that, during a period of war and diſorder, the military virtues ſhould be more celebrated than the pacific, and attract more the admiration and attention of mankind. "How "uſual is it," ſays TULLY *, "to find CIMBRI-"ANS, CELTIBERIANS, and other Barbarians, who "bear, with inflexible conſtancy, all the fatigues "and dangers of the field; but are immediately "diſpirited under the pain and hazard of a lan-"guiſhing diſtemper: While, on the other hand,

* Tuſc. Quæſt. lib. ii.

"the

" the GREEKS patiently endure the ſlow approaches " of death, when armed with ſickneſs and diſeaſe; " but timorouſly fly his preſence, when he attacks " them violently with ſwords and falchions!" So different is even the ſame virtue of courage among warlike or peaceful nations! And indeed, we may obſerve, that, as the difference between war and peace is the greateſt which ariſes among nations and public ſocieties, it produces alſo the greateſt variations and moral ſentiment, and diverſifies the moſt our ideas of virtue and perſonal merit.

Sometimes too, magnanimity, greatneſs of mind, diſdain of ſlavery, inflexible rigour and integrity, may ſuit better the circumſtances of one age than thoſe of another, and have a more kindly influence, both on public affairs, and on a man's own ſafety and advancement. Our idea of merit, therefore, will alſo vary a little with theſe variations; and LABEO, perhaps, be cenſured for the ſame qualities, which procured CATO the higheſt approbation.

A degree of luxury may be ruinous and pernicious in a native of SWITZERLAND, which only foſters the arts, and encourages induſtry in a FRENCHMAN or ENGLISHMAN. We are not, therefore, to expect, either the ſame ſentiments, or the

ſame laws in BERNE, which prevail in LONDON or PARIS.

Different cuſtoms have alſo ſome influence as well as different utilities; and by giving an early biaſs to the mind, may produce a ſuperior propenſity, either to the uſeful or the agreeable qualities; to thoſe which regard ſelf, or thoſe which extend to ſociety. Theſe four ſources of moral ſentiment ſtill ſubſiſt; but particular accidents may, at one time, make any one of them flow with greater abundance than at another.

The cuſtoms of ſome nations ſhut up the women from all ſocial commerce: Thoſe of others make them ſo eſſential a part of ſociety and converſation, that, except where buſineſs is tranſacted, the male-ſex alone are ſuppoſed almoſt wholly incapable of mutual diſcourſe and entertainment. As this difference is the moſt material which can happen in private life, it muſt alſo produce the greateſt variation in our moral ſentiments.

Of all nations in the world, where polygamy was not allowed, the GREEKS ſeem to have been the moſt reſerved in their commerce with the fair-ſex, and to have impoſed on them the ſtricteſt laws of modeſty and decency. We have a ſtrong inſtance of

of this in an oration of LYSIAS †. A widow injured, ruined, undone, calls a meeting of a few of her neareſt friends and relations; and though never before accuſtomed, ſays the orator, to ſpeak in the preſence of men, the diſtreſs of her circumſtances conſtrained her to lay the caſe before them. The very opening her mouth in ſuch company required, it ſeems, an apology.

When DEMOSTHENES proſecuted his tutors, to make them refund his patrimony, it became neceſſary for him, in the courſe of the law-ſuit, to prove that the marriage of APHOBUS's ſiſter with ONETER was entirely fraudulent, and that, notwithſtanding her ſham marriage, ſhe had lived with her brother at ATHENS for two years laſt paſt, ever ſince her divorce from her former huſband. And it is remarkable, that though theſe were people of the firſt fortune and diſtinction in the city, the orator could prove this fact no way, but by calling for her female ſlaves to be put to the queſtion, and by the evidence of one phyſician, who had ſeen her in her brother's houſe during her illneſs ‡. So reſerved were GREEK manners.

We may be aſſured, that an extreme purity was the conſequence of this reſerve. Accordingly we

† Orat. 33. ‡ In Oneterem.

find, that, except the fabulous ſtories of an HELEN and a CLYTEMNESTRA, there ſcarcely is an inſtance of any event in the GREEK hiſtory, which proceeded from the intrigues of women. On the other hand, in modern times, particularly in a neighbouring nation, the females enter into all tranſactions and all management of church and ſtate: And no man can expect ſucceſs, who takes not care to obtain their good graces. HARRY the third, by incurring the diſpleaſure of the fair, endangered his crown, and loſt his life, as much as by his indulgence to hereſy.

It is needleſs to diſſemble: The conſequence of a very free commerce between the ſexes, and of their living much together, will often terminate in intrigues and gallantry. We muſt ſacrifice ſomewhat of the *uſeful*, if we be very anxious to obtain all the *agreeable* qualities; and cannot pretend to reach alike every kind of advantage. Inſtances of licence, daily multiplying, will weaken the ſcandal with the one ſex, and teach the other, by degrees, to adopt the famous maxim of LA FONTAINE, with regard to female infidelity, *that if one knows it, it is but a ſmall matter; if one knows it not, it is nothing* *.

Some people are inclined to think, that the beſt way of adjuſting all differences, and of keeping the

* Quand on le ſçait c'eſt peu de choſe;
Quand on l'ignore, ce n'eſt rien.

proper

proper medium between the *agreeable* and the *uſeful* qualities of the ſex, is to live with them after the manner of the ROMANS and the ENGLISH (for the cuſtoms of theſe two nations ſeem ſimilar in this reſpect *) that is, without gallantry †, and without jealouſy. By a parity of reaſon, the cuſtoms of the SPANIARDS and of the ITALIANS of an age ago (for the preſent are very different) muſt be the worſt of any; becauſe they favour both gallantry and jealouſy.

Nor will theſe different cuſtoms of nations affect only the one ſex: Their idea of perſonal merit in the males muſt alſo be ſomewhat different with regard, at leaſt, to converſation, addreſs, and humour. The one nation, where the men live much apart, will naturally more approve of prudence; the other of gaiety. With the one ſimplicity of manners will be in the higheſt eſteem; with the other, politeneſs. The one will diſtinguiſh themſelves by good-ſenſe and judgment; the other, by taſte and delicacy. The eloquence of the former will ſhine moſt in the ſenate; that of the other, on the theatre.

* See NOTE [CC].

† The gallantry here meant is that of amours and attachments, not that of complaiſance, which is as much paid to the fair-ſex in ENGLAND as in any other country.

Theſe, I ſay, are the *natural* effects of ſuch cuſtoms. For it muſt be confeſſed, that chance has a great influence on national manners; and many events happen in ſociety, which are not to be accounted for by general rules. Who could imagine, for inſtance, that the ROMANS, who lived freely with their women, ſhould be very indifferent about muſic, and eſteem dancing infamous: While the GREEKS, who never almoſt ſaw a woman but in their own houſes, were continually piping, ſinging, and dancing?

The differences of moral ſentiment, which naturally ariſe from a republican or monarchical government, are alſo very obvious; as well as thoſe, which proceed from general riches or poverty, union or faction, ignorance or learning. I ſhall conclude this long diſcourſe with obſerving, that different cuſtoms and ſituations vary not the original ideas of merit (however they may, ſome conſequences) in any very eſſential point, and prevail chiefly with regard to young men, who can aſpire to the agreeable qualities, and may attempt to pleaſe. The MANNER, the ORNAMENTS, the GRACES, which ſucceed in this ſhape, are more arbitrary and caſual: But the merit of riper years is almoſt every where the ſame; and conſiſts chiefly in integrity, humanity, ability, knowledge and the other more ſolid and uſeful qualities of the human mind.

What

What you inſiſt on, replied PALAMEDES, may have ſome foundation, when you adhere to the maxims of common life and ordinary conduct. Experience and the practice of the world readily correct any great extravagance on either ſide. But what ſay you to *artificial* lives and manners? How do you reconcile the maxims, on which, in different ages and nations, theſe are founded?

What do you underſtand by *artificial* lives and manners? ſaid I. I explain myſelf, replied he. You know, that religion had, in ancient times, very little influence on common life, and that, after men had performed their duty in ſacrifices and prayers at the temple, they thought, that the gods left the reſt of their conduct to themſelves, and were little pleaſed or offended with thoſe virtues or vices, which only affected the peace and happineſs of human ſociety. In thoſe ages, it was the buſineſs of philoſophy alone to regulate men's ordinary behaviour and deportment; and accordingly, we may obſerve, that this being the ſole principle, by which a man could elevate himſelf above his fellows, it acquired a mighty aſcendant over many, and produced great ſingularities of maxims and of conduct. At preſent, that philoſophy has loſt the allurement of novelty, it has no ſuch extenſive influence; but ſeems to confine itſelf moſtly to ſpeculations in the cloſet; in the ſame manner, as the ancient religion was limited to ſacrifices

crifices in the temple. Its place is now ſupplied by the modern religion, which inſpects our whole conduct, and preſcribes an univerſal rule to our actions, to our words, to our very thoughts and inclinations; a rule ſo much the more auſtere, that it is guarded by infinite, though diſtant, rewards and puniſhments; and no infraction of it can ever be concealed or diſguiſed.

DIOGENES is the moſt celebrated model of extravagant philoſophy. Let us ſeek a parallel to him in modern times. We ſhall not diſgrace any philoſophic name by a compariſon with the DOMINICS or LOYOLAS, or any canonized monk or friar. Let us compare him to PASCAL, a man of parts and genius as well as DIOGENES himſelf; and perhaps too, a man of virtue, had he allowed his virtuous inclinations to have exerted and diſplayed themſelves.

The foundation of DIOGENES's conduct was an endeavour to render himſelf an independent being as much as poſſible, and to confine all his wants and deſires and pleaſures within himſelf and his own mind: The aim of PASCAL was to keep a perpetual ſenſe of his dependence before his eyes, and never to forget his numberleſs wants and neceſſities. The ancient ſupported himſelf by magnanimity, oſtentation, pride, and the idea of his own ſuperiority above his fellow creatures. The modern made conſtant

ſtant profeſſion of humility and abaſement, of the contempt and hatred of himſelf; and endeavoured to attain theſe ſuppoſed virtues, as far as they are attainable. The auſterities of the GREEK were in order to inure himſelf to hardſhips, and prevent his ever ſuffering: Thoſe of the FRENCHMAN were embraced merely for their own ſake, and in order to ſuffer as much as poſſible. The philoſopher indulged himſelf in the moſt beaſtly pleaſures, even in public: The ſaint refuſed himſelf the moſt innocent, even in private. The former thought it his duty to love his friends, and to rail at them, and reprove them, and ſcold them: The latter endeavoured to be abſolutely indifferent towards his neareſt relations, and to love and ſpeak well of his enemies. The great object of DIOGENES's wit was every kind of ſuperſtition, that is every kind of religion known in his time. The mortality of the ſoul was his ſtandard principle; and even his ſentiments of a divine providence ſeem to have been very licentious. The moſt ridiculous ſuperſtitions directed PASCAL's faith and practice; and an extreme contempt of this life, in compariſon of the future, was the chief foundation of his conduct.

In ſuch a remarkable contraſt do theſe two men ſtand: Yet both of them have met with general admiration in their different ages, and have been propoſed as models of imitation. Where then is

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the univerſal ſtandard of morals, which you talk of? And what rule ſhall we eſtabliſh for the many different, nay contrary ſentiments of mankind?

An experiment, ſaid I, which ſucceeds in the air, will not always ſucceed in a vacuum. When men depart from the maxims of common reaſon, and affect theſe *artificial* lives, as you call them, no one can anſwer for what will pleaſe or diſpleaſe them. They are in a different element from the reſt of mankind; and the natural principles of their mind play not with the ſame regularity, as if left to themſelves, free from the illuſions of religious ſuperſtition or philoſophical enthuſiaſm.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF RELIGION.

INTRODUCTION.

AS every enquiry which regards religion is of the utmoſt importance, there are two queſtions in particular, which challenge our principal attention, to wit, that concerning its foundation in reaſon, and that concerning its origin in human nature. Happily, the firſt queſtion, which is the moſt important, admits of the moſt obvious, at leaſt, the cleareſt ſolution. The whole frame of nature beſpeaks an intelligent author; and no rational enquirer can, after ſerious reflection, ſuſpend his belief a moment with regard to the primary principles of genuine Theiſm and Religion. But the other queſtion,

queſtion, concerning the origin of religion in human nature, is expoſed to ſome more difficulty. The belief of inviſible, intelligent power has been very generally diffuſed over the human race, in all places and in all ages; but it has neither perhaps been ſo univerſal as to admit of no exceptions, nor has it been, in any degree, uniform in the ideas, which it has ſuggeſted. Some nations have been diſcovered, who entertained no ſentiments of Religion, if travellers and hiſtorians may be credited; and no two nations, and ſcarce any two men, have ever agreed preciſely in the ſame ſentiments. It would appear, therefore, that this preconception ſprings not from an original inſtinct or primary impreſſion of nature, ſuch as gives riſe to ſelf-love, affection between the ſexes, love of progeny, gratitude, reſentment; ſince every inſtinct of this kind has been found abſolutely univerſal in all nations and ages, and has always a preciſe determinate object, which it inflexibly purſues. The firſt religious principles muſt be ſecondary; ſuch as may eaſily be perverted by various accidents and cauſes, and whoſe operation too, in ſome caſes, may, by an extraordinary concurrence of circumſtances, be altogether prevented. What thoſe principles are, which give riſe to the original belief, and what thoſe accidents and cauſes are, which direct its operation, is the ſubject of our preſent enquiry.

SECT.

SECT. I. *That Polytheiſm was the primary Religion of Men.*

It appears to me, that, if we conſider the improvement of human ſociety, from rude beginnings to a ſtate of greater perfection, polytheiſm or idolatry was, and neceſſarily muſt have been, the firſt and moſt ancient religion of mankind. This opinion I ſhall endeavour to confirm by the following arguments.

It is a matter of fact inconteſtable, that about 1700 years ago all mankind were idolaters. The doubtful and ſceptical principles of a few philoſophers, or the theiſm, and that too not entirely pure, of one or two nations, form no objection worth regarding. Behold then the clear teſtimony of hiſtory. The farther we mount up into antiquity, the more do we find mankind plunged into idolatry. No marks, no ſymptoms of any more perfect religion. The moſt ancient records of human race ſtill preſent us with polytheiſm as the popular and eſtabliſhed ſyſtem. The north, the ſouth, the eaſt, the weſt, give their unanimous teſtimony to the ſame fact. What can be oppoſed to ſo full an evidence?

As far as writing or hiſtory reaches, mankind, in ancient times, appear univerſally to have been polytheiſts.

lytheiſts. Shall we aſſert, that, in more ancient times, before the knowledge of letters, or the diſcovery of any art or ſcience, men entertained the principles of pure theiſm? That is, while they were ignorant and barbarous, they diſcovered truth: But fell into error, as ſoon as they acquired learning and politeneſs.

But in this aſſertion you not only contradict all appearance of probability, but alſo our preſent experience concerning the principles and opinions of barbarous nations. The ſavage tribes of AMERICA, AFRICA, and ASIA are all idolaters. Not a ſingle exception to this rule. Inſomuch, that, were a traveller to tranſport himſelf into any unknown region; if he found inhabitants cultivated with arts and ſciences, though even upon that ſuppoſition there are odds againſt their being theiſts, yet could he not ſafely, till farther inquiry, pronounce any thing on that head: But if he found them ignorant and barbarous, he might beforehand declare them idolaters; and there ſcarcely is a poſſibility of his being miſtaken.

It ſeems certain, that, according to the natural progreſs of human thought, the ignorant multitude muſt firſt entertain ſome groveling and familiar notion of ſuperior powers, before they ſtretch their conception to that perfect Being, who beſtowed or-

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der on the whole frame of nature. We may as reaſonably imagine, that men inhabited palaces before huts and cottages, or ſtudied geometry before agriculture; as aſſert that the Deity appeared to them a pure ſpirit, omniſcient, omnipotent, and omnipreſent, before he was apprehended to be a powerful, though limited being, with human paſſions and appetites, limbs and organs. The mind riſes gradually, from inferior to ſuperior: By abſtracting from what is imperfect, it forms an idea of perfection: And ſlowly diſtinguiſhing the nobler parts of its own frame from the groſſer, it learns to transfer only the former, much elevated and refined, to its divinity. Nothing could diſturb this natural progreſs of thought, but ſome obvious and invincible argument, which might immediately lead the mind into the pure principles of theiſm, and make it overleap, at one bound, the vaſt interval which is interpoſed between the human and the divine nature. But though I allow, that the order and frame of the univerſe, when accurately examined, affords ſuch an argument; yet I can never think, that this conſideration could have an influence on mankind, when they formed their firſt rude notions of religion.

The cauſes of ſuch objects, as are quite familiar to us, never ſtrike our attention or curioſity; and however extraordinary or ſurprizing theſe objects in

themſelves, they are paſſed over, by the raw and ignorant multitude, without much examination or enquiry. ADAM, riſing at once, in paradiſe, and in the full perfection of his faculties, would naturally, as repreſented by MILTON, be aſtoniſhed at the glorious appearances of nature, the heavens, the air, the earth, his own organs and members; and would be led to aſk, whence this wonderful ſcene aroſe. But a barbarous, neceſſitous animal (ſuch as man is on the firſt origin of ſociety) preſſed by ſuch numerous wants and paſſions, has no leiſure to admire the regular face of nature, or make enquiries concerning the cauſe of objects, to which, from his infancy, he has been gradually accuſtomed. On the contrary, the more regular and uniform, that is, the more perfect nature appears, the more is he familiarized to it, and the leſs inclined to ſcrutinize and examine it. A monſtrous birth excites his curioſity, and is deemed a prodigy. It alarms him from its novelty; and immediately ſets him a trembling, and ſacrificing, and praying. But an animal compleat in all its limbs and organs, is to him an ordinary ſpectacle, and produces no religious opinion or affection. Aſk him, whence that animal aroſe; he will tell you, from the copulation of its parents. And theſe, whence? From the copulation of theirs. A few removes ſatisfy his curioſity, and ſet the objects at ſuch a diſtance, that he entirely loſes ſight of them. Imagine not, that he will ſo

much as ſtart the queſtion, whence the firſt animal; much leſs, whence the whole ſyſtem or united fabric of the univerſe aroſe. Or, if you ſtart ſuch a queſtion to him, expect not, that he will employ his mind with any anxiety about a ſubject, ſo remote, ſo unintereſting, and which ſo much exceeds the bounds of his capacity.

But farther, if men were at firſt led into the belief of one Supreme Being, by reaſoning from the frame of nature, they could never poſſibly leave that belief, in order to embrace idolatry; but the ſame principles of reaſon, which at firſt produced and diffuſed over mankind, ſo magnificent an opinion, muſt be able, with greater facility, to preſerve it. The firſt invention and proof of any doctrine is much more difficult than the ſupporting and retaining it.

There is a great difference between hiſtorical facts and ſpeculative opinions; nor is the knowledge of the one propagated in the ſame manner with that of the other. An hiſtorical fact, while it paſſes by oral tradition from eye-witneſſes and contemporaries, is diſguiſed in every ſucceſſive narration, and may at laſt retain but very ſmall, if any, reſemblance of the original truth, on which it was founded. The frail memories of men, their love of exaggeration, their ſupine careleſſneſs; theſe principles, if not

corrected by books and writing, ſoon pervert the account of hiſtorical events; where argument or reaſoning has little or no place, nor can ever recal the truth, which has once eſcaped thoſe narrations. It is thus the fables of HERCULES, THESEUS, BACCHUS are ſuppoſed to have been originally founded in true hiſtory, corrupted by tradition. But with regard to ſpeculative opinions, the caſe is far otherwiſe. If theſe opinions be founded in arguments ſo clear and obvious as to carry conviction with the generality of mankind, the ſame arguments, which at firſt diffuſed the opinions, will ſtill preſerve them in their original purity. If the arguments be more abſtruſe, and more remote from vulgar apprehenſion, the opinions will always be confined to a few perſons; and as ſoon as men leave the contemplation of the arguments, the opinions will immediately be loſt and be buried in oblivion. Which ever ſide of this dilemma we take, it muſt appear impoſſible, that theiſm could, from reaſoning, have been the primary religion of human race, and have afterwards, by its corruption, given birth to idolatry and to all the various ſuperſtitions of the heathen world. Reaſon, when obvious, prevents theſe corruptions: When abſtruſe, it keeps the principles entirely from the knowledge of the vulgar, who are alone liable to corrupt any principles or opinions.

SECT.

SECT. II. *Origin of Polytheiſm.*

If we would, therefore, indulge our curioſity, in enquiring concerning the origin of religion, we muſt turn our thoughts towards idolatry or polytheiſm, the primitive religion of uninſtructed mankind.

Were men led into the apprehenſion of inviſible, intelligent power by a contemplation of the works of nature, they could never poſſibly entertain any conception but of one ſingle being, who beſtowed exiſtence and order on this vaſt machine, and adjuſted all its parts, according to one regular plan or connected ſyſtem. For though, to perſons of a certain turn of mind, it may not appear altogether abſurd, that ſeveral independent beings, endowed with ſuperior wiſdom, might conſpire in the contrivance and execution of one regular plan; yet is this a merely arbitrary ſuppoſition, which, even if allowed poſſible, muſt be confeſſed neither to be ſupported by probability nor neceſſity. All things in the univerſe are evidently of a piece. Every thing is adjuſted to every thing. One deſign prevails throughout the whole. And this uniformity leads the mind to acknowledge one author; becauſe the conception of different authors, without any diſtinction of attributes or operations, ſerves only to give perplexity

to the imagination, without beſtowing any ſatisfaction on the underſtanding. The ſtatue of LAOCOON, as we learn from PLINY, was the work of three artiſts: But it is certain, that, were we not told ſo, we ſhould never have concluded, that a groupe of figures, cut from one ſtone, and united in one plan, was not the work and contrivance of one ſtatuary. To aſcribe any ſingle effect to the combination of ſeveral cauſes, is not ſurely a natural and obvious ſuppoſition.

On the other hand, if, leaving the works of nature, we trace the footſteps of inviſible power in the various and contrary events of human life, we are neceſſarily led into polytheiſm and to the acknowledgment of ſeveral limited and imperfect deities. Storms and tempeſts ruin what is nouriſhed by the ſun. The ſun deſtroys what is foſtered by the moiſture of dews and rains. War may be favourable to a nation, whom the inclemency of the ſeaſons afflicts with famine. Sickneſs and peſtilence may depopulate a kingdom, amidſt the moſt profuſe plenty. The ſame nation is not, at the ſame time, equally ſucceſsful by ſea and land. And a nation, which now triumphs over its enemies, may anon ſubmit to their more proſperous arms. In ſhort, the conduct of events, or what we call the plan of a particular providence, is ſo full of variety and uncertainty, that, if we ſuppoſe it immediately ordered by any intelligent

intelligent beings, we muſt acknowledge a contrariety in their deſigns and intentions, a conſtant combat of oppoſite powers, and a repentance or change of intention in the ſame power, from impotence or levity. Each nation has its tutelar deity. Each element is ſubjected to its inviſible power or agent. The province of each god is ſeparate from that of another. Nor are the operations of the ſame god always certain and invariable. To-day he protects: To-morrow he abandons us. Prayers and ſacrifices, rites and ceremonies, well or ill performed, are the ſources of his favour or enmity, and produce all the good or ill fortune, which are to be found amongſt mankind.

We may conclude, therefore, that, in all nations, which have embraced polytheiſm or idolatry, the firſt ideas of religion aroſe not from a contemplation of the works of nature, but from a concern with regard to the events of life, and from the inceſſant hopes and fears, which actuate the human mind. Accordingly, we find, that all idolaters, having ſeparated the provinces of their deities, have recourſe to that inviſible agent, to whoſe authority they are immediately ſubjected, and whoſe province it is to ſuperintend that courſe of actions, in which they are, at any time, engaged. JUNO is invoked at marriages; LUCINA at births. NEPTUNE receives the prayers of ſeamen; and MARS of warriors. The

huſbandman cultivates his field under the protection of CERES; and the merchant acknowledges the authority of MERCURY. Each natural event is ſuppoſed to be governed by ſome intelligent agent; and nothing proſperous or adverſe can happen in life, which may not be the ſubject of peculiar prayers or thankſgivings *.

It muſt neceſſarily, indeed, be allowed, that, in order to carry men's attention beyond the preſent courſe of things, or lead them into any inference concerning inviſible intelligent power, they muſt be actuated by ſome paſſion, which prompts their thought and reflection; ſome motive, which urges their firſt enquiry. But what paſſion ſhall we here have recourſe to, for explaining an effect of ſuch mighty conſequence? Not ſpeculative curioſity ſurely, or the pure love of truth. That motive is too refined for ſuch groſs apprehenſions, and would lead men into enquiries concerning the frame of nature; a ſubject too large and comprehenſive for their narrow capacities. No paſſions, therefore, can be ſuppoſed to work upon ſuch barbarians, but the ordinary affections of human life; the anxious concern for happineſs, the dread of future miſery, the terror of death, the thirſt of revenge, the appetite for food and other neceſſaries. Agitated by hopes

* See NOTE [DD].

and

and fears of this nature, eſpecially the latter, men ſcrutinize, with a trembling curioſity, the courſe of future cauſes, and examine the various and contrary events of human life. And in this diſordered ſcene, with eyes ſtill more diſordered and aſtoniſhed, they ſee the firſt obſcure traces of divinity.

SECT. III. *The ſame ſubject continued.*

We are placed in this world, as in a great theatre, where the true ſprings and cauſes of every event, are entirely unknown to us; nor have we either ſufficient wiſdom to foreſee, or power to prevent thoſe ills, with which we are continually threatened. We hang in perpetual ſuſpence between life and death, health and ſickneſs, plenty and want; which are diſtributed amongſt the human ſpecies by ſecret and unknown cauſes, whoſe operation is oft unexpected, and always unaccountable. Theſe *unknown cauſes*, then, become the conſtant object of our hope and fear; and while the paſſions are kept in perpetual alarm by an anxious expectation of the events, the imagination is equally employed in forming ideas of thoſe powers, on which we have ſo entire a dependance. Could men anatomize nature, according to the moſt probable, at leaſt the moſt intelligible philoſophy, they would find, that theſe cauſes are nothing but the particular fabric and ſtructure of the minute parts of their own bodies and of external objects;

objects; and that, by a regular and conſtant machinery, all the events are produced, about which they are ſo much concerned. But this philoſophy exceeds the comprehenſion of the ignorant multitude, who can only conceive the *unknown cauſes* in a general and confuſed manner; though their imagination, perpetually employed on the ſame ſubject, muſt labour to form ſome particular and diſtinct idea of them. The more they conſider theſe cauſes themſelves, and the uncertainty of their operation, the leſs ſatisfaction do they meet with in their reſearch; and, however unwilling, they muſt at laſt have abandoned ſo arduous an attempt, were it not for a propenſity in human nature, which leads into a ſyſtem, that gives them ſome ſatisfaction.

There is an univerſal tendency amongſt mankind to conceive all beings like themſelves, and to tranſfer to every object, thoſe qualities, with which they are familiarly acquainted, and of which they are intimately conſcious. We find human faces in the moon, armies in the clouds; and by a natural propenſity, if not corrected by experience and reflection, aſcribe malice and good-will to every thing, that hurts or pleaſes us. Hence the frequency and beauty of the *proſopopœia* in poetry, where trees, mountains and ſtreams are perſonified, and the inanimate parts of nature acquire ſentiment and paſſion. And though theſe poetical figures and expreſſions

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gain not on the belief, they may ſerve, at leaſt, to prove a certain tendency in the imagination, without which they could neither be beautiful nor natural. Nor is a river-god or hama-dryad always taken for a mere poetical or imaginary perſonage; but may ſometimes enter into the real creed of the ignorant vulgar; while each grove or field is repreſented as poſſeſſed of a particular *genius* or inviſible power, which inhabits or protects it. Nay, philoſophers cannot entirely exempt themſelves from this natural frailty; but have oft aſcribed to inanimate matter the horror of a *vacuum*, ſympathies, antipathies, and other affections of human nature. The abſurdity is not leſs, while we caſt our eyes upwards; and transferring, as is too uſual, human paſſions and infirmities to the deity, repreſent him as jealous and revengeful, capricious and partial, and, in ſhort, a wicked and fooliſh man, in every reſpect but his ſuperior power and authority. No wonder, then, that mankind, being placed in ſuch an abſolute ignorance of cauſes, and being at the ſame time ſo anxious concerning their future fortunes, ſhould immediately acknowledge a dependence on inviſible powers, poſſeſſed of ſentiment and intelligence. The *unknown cauſes*, which continually employ their thought, appearing always in the ſame aſpect, are all apprehended to be of the ſame kind or ſpecies. Nor is it long before we aſcribe to them thought, and reaſon, and paſſion, and ſometimes

times even the limbs and figures of men, in order to bring them nearer to a reſemblance with ourſelves.

In proportion as any man's courſe of life is governed by accident, we always find, that he encreaſes in ſuperſtition; as may particularly be obſerved of gameſters and ſailors, who, though of all mankind, the leaſt capable of ſerious conſideration, abound moſt in frivolous and ſuperſtitious apprehenſions. The gods, ſays CORIOLANUS in DIONYSIUS *, have an influence in every affair; but above all, in war; where the event is ſo uncertain. All human life, eſpecially before the inſtitution of order and good government, being ſubject to fortuitous accidents; it is natural, that ſuperſtition ſhould prevail every where in barbarous ages, and put men on the moſt earneſt enquiry concerning thoſe inviſible powers, who diſpoſe of their happineſs or miſery. Ignorant of aſtronomy and the anatomy of plants and animals, and too little curious to obſerve the admirable adjuſtment of final cauſes; they remain ſtill unacquainted with a firſt and ſupreme creator, and with that infinitely perfect ſpirit, who alone, by his almighty will, beſtowed order on the whole frame of nature. Such a magnificent idea is too big for their narrow conceptions, which can neither obſerve the beauty of the work, nor comprehend the grandeur

* Lib. viii.

of

of its author. They ſuppoſe their deities, however potent and inviſible, to be nothing but a ſpecies of human creatures, perhaps raiſed from among mankind, and retaining all human paſſions and appetites, together with corporeal limbs and organs. Such limited beings, though maſters of human fate, being, each of them, incapable of extending his influence every where, muſt be vaſtly multiplied, in order to anſwer that variety of events, which happen over the whole face of nature. Thus every place is ſtored with a crowd of local deities; and thus idolatry has prevailed, and ſtill prevails, among the greateſt part of uninſtructed mankind *.

Any of the human affections may lead us into the notion of inviſible, intelligent power; hope as well as fear, gratitude as well as affliction: But if we examine our own hearts, or obſerve what paſſes around us, we ſhall find, that men are much oftener

* The following lines of EURIPIDES are ſo much to the preſent purpoſe, that I cannot forbear quoting them:

Ουκ εςιν ȣδεν πιςον, ȣτ ευδοξια,
Ουτ' αν καλως πρασσοντα μη πραξειν κακως.
Φυρȣσι δ'αυθ'οι θεοι παλιν τε και προσω,
Ταραγμον εντιθεντες, ως αγνωσια
Σεβωμεν αυτȣς. HECUBA.

"There is nothing ſecure in the world; no glory, no pro-
"ſperity. The gods toſs all life into confuſion; mix every thing
"with its reverſe; that all of us, from our ignorance and uncer-
"tainty, may pay them the more worſhip and reverence."

thrown

thrown on their knees by the melancholy than by the agreeable paſſions. Proſperity is eaſily received as our due, and few queſtions are aſked concerning its cauſe or author. It begets cheerfulneſs and activity and alacrity and a lively enjoyment of every ſocial and ſenſual pleaſure: And during this ſtate of mind, men have little leiſure or inclination to think of the unknown inviſible regions. On the other hand, every diſaſtrous accident alarms us, and ſets us on enquiries concerning the principles whence it aroſe: Apprehenſions ſpring up with regard to futurity: And the mind, ſunk into diffidence, terror, and melancholy, has recourſe to every method of appeaſing thoſe ſacred intelligent powers, on whom our fortune is ſuppoſed entirely to depend.

No topic is more uſual with all popular divines than to diſplay the advantages of affliction, in bringing men to a due ſenſe of religion; by ſubduing their confidence and ſenſuality, which in times of proſperity, make them forgetful of a divine providence. Nor is this topic confined merely to modern religions. The ancients have alſo employed it. *Fortune has never liberally, without envy*, ſays a GREEK hiſtorian *, *beſtowed an unmixed happineſs on mankind; but with all her gifts has ever conjoined ſome diſaſtrous circumſtance, in order to chaſtize men*

* DIOD. SIC. lib. iii.

into

into a reverence for the gods, whom, in a continued courſe of proſperity, they are apt to neglect and forget.

What age or period of life is the moſt addicted to ſuperſtition? The weakeſt and moſt timid. What ſex? The ſame anſwer muſt be given. *The leaders and examples of every kind of ſuperſtition,* ſays STRABO †, *are the women. Theſe excite the men to devotion and ſupplications, and the obſervance of religious days. It is rare to meet with one that lives apart from the females, and yet is addicted to ſuch practices. And nothing can, for this reaſon, be more improbable, than the account given of an order of men amongſt the* GETES, *who practiſed celibacy, and were notwithſtanding the moſt religious fanatics.* A method of reaſoning, which would lead us to entertain a bad idea of the devotion of monks; did we not know by an experience, not ſo common, perhaps, in STRABO's days, that one may practiſe celibacy, and profeſs chaſtity; and yet maintain the cloſeſt connexions and moſt entire ſympathy with that timorous and pious ſex.

SECT. IV. *Deities not conſidered as creators or formers of the world.*

The only point of theology in which we ſhall find a conſent of mankind almoſt univerſal, is, that there

† Lib. vii.

is

is inviſible, intelligent power in the world: But whether this power be ſupreme or ſubordinate, whether confined to one being or diſtributed among ſeveral, what attributes, qualities, connexions or principles of action ought to be aſcribed to thoſe beings; concerning all theſe points, there is the wideſt difference in the popular ſyſtems of theology. Our anceſtors in EUROPE, before the revival of letters, believed, as we do at preſent, that there was one ſupreme God, the author of nature, whoſe power, though in itſelf uncontroulable, was yet often exerted by the interpoſition of his angels and ſubordinate miniſters, who executed his ſacred purpoſes. But they alſo believed, that all nature was full of other inviſible powers; fairies, goblins, elves, ſprights; beings, ſtronger and mightier than men, but much inferior to the celeſtial natures, who ſurround the throne of God. Now, ſuppoſe, that any one, in thoſe ages, had denied the exiſtence of God and of his angels; would not his impiety juſtly have deſerved the appellation of atheiſm, even though he had ſtill allowed, by ſome odd capricious reaſoning, that the popular ſtories of elves and fairies were juſt and well-grounded? The difference, on the one hand, between ſuch a perſon and a genuine theiſt is infinitely greater than that, on the other, between him and one that abſolutely excludes all inviſible intelligent power. And it is a fallacy, merely from the caſual reſemblance of names, without

out any conformity of meaning, to rank ſuch oppoſite opinions under the ſame denomination.

To any one, who conſiders juſtly of the matter, it will appear, that the gods of all polytheiſts or idolaters are no better than the elves or fairies of our anceſtors, and merit as little any pious worſhip or veneration. Theſe pretended religioniſts are really a kind of ſuperſtitious atheiſts, and acknowledge no being, that correſponds to our idea of a deity. No firſt principle of mind or thought: No ſupreme government and adminiſtration: No divine contrivance or intention in the fabric of the world.

The CHINESE, when * their prayers are not anſwered, beat their idols. The deities of the LAPLANDERS are any large ſtone which they meet with of an extraordinary ſhape †. The EGYPTIAN mythologiſts, in order to account for animal worſhip, ſaid, that the gods, purſued by the violence of earth-born men, who were their enemies, had formerly been obliged to diſguiſe themſelves under the ſemblance of beaſts ‡. The CAUNII, a nation in the Leſſer ASIA, reſolving to admit no ſtrange gods among them, regularly, at certain ſeaſons, aſſembled

* Pere le Compte. † Regnard, Voïage de Laponie.

‡ Diod. Sic. lib. i. Lucian. de Sacrificiis. OVID alludes to the ſame tradition, Metam. lib. v. l. 321. So alſo MANILIUS, lib. iv.

themſelves compleatly armed, beat the air with their lances, and proceeded in that manner to their frontiers; in order, as they ſaid, to expel the foreign deities *. *Not even the immortal gods*, ſaid ſome GERMAN nations to CÆSAR, *are a match for the* SUEVI †.

Many ills, ſays DIONE in HOMER to VENUS wounded by DIOMEDE, many ills, my daughter, have the gods inflicted on men: And many ills, in return, have men inflicted on the gods ‡. We need but open any claſſic author to meet with theſe groſs repreſentations of the deities; and LONGINUS ‖ with reaſon obſerves, that ſuch ideas of the divine nature, if literally taken, contain a true atheiſm.

Some writers § have been ſurprized, that the impieties of ARISTOPHANES ſhould have been tolerated, nay publicly acted and applauded by the ATHENIANS; a people ſo ſuperſtitious and ſo jealous of the public religion, that, at that very time, they put SOCRATES to death for his imagined incredulity. But theſe writers conſider not, that the ludicrous, familiar images, under which the gods

* Herodot. lib. i.

† Cæſ. Comment. de bello Gallico, lib. iv.

‡ Lib. ix. 382. ‖ Cap. ix.

§ Pere Brumoy, Theatre des Grecs; & Fontenelle, Hiſtoire des Oracles.

are

are repreſented by that comic poet, inſtead of appearing impious, were the genuine lights, in which the ancients conceived their divinities. What conduct can be more criminal or mean, than that of JUPITER in AMPHITRION? Yet that play, which repreſented his gallant exploits, was ſuppoſed ſo agreeable to him, that it was always acted in ROME by public authority, when the ſtate was threatened with peſtilence, famine, or any general calamity *. The ROMANS ſuppoſed, that, like all old letchers, he would be highly pleaſed with the rehearſal of his former feats of proweſs and vigour, and that no topic was ſo proper, upon which to flatter his vanity.

The LACEDEMONIANS, ſays XENOPHON †, always, during war, put up their petitions very early in the morning, in order to be beforehand with their enemies, and, by being the firſt ſolicitors, pre-engage the gods in their favour. We may gather from SENECA ‡, that it was uſual, for the votaries in the temples, to make intereſt with the beadle or ſexton, that they might have a ſeat near the image of the deity, in order to be the beſt heard in their prayers and applications to him. The TYRIANS, when beſieged by ALEXANDER, threw chains on the ſtatue of HERCULES, to prevent that deity from de-

* Arnob. lib. vii. † De Laced. Rep. ‡ Epiſt. xli.

ſerting to the enemy ‖. AUGUSTUS, having twice loſt his fleet by ſtorms, forbad NEPTUNE to be carried in proceſſion along with the other gods; and fancied, that he had ſufficiently revenged himſelf by that expedient *. After GERMANICUS's death, the people were ſo enraged at their gods, that they ſtoned them in their temples; and openly renounced all allegiance to them †.

To aſcribe the origin and fabric of the univerſe to theſe imperfect beings never enters into the imagination of any polytheiſt or idolater. HESIOD, whoſe writings, with thoſe of HOMER, contained the canonical ſyſtem of the heathens §; HESIOD, I ſay, ſuppoſes gods and men to have ſprung equally from the unknown powers of nature ‡. And throughout the whole theogony of that author, PANDORA is the only inſtance of creation or a voluntary production; and ſhe too was formed by the gods merely from deſpight to PROMETHEUS, who had furniſhed men with ſtolen fire from the celeſtial regions ⸸.

‖ Quint. Curtius, lib. iv. cap. 3. Diod. Sic. lib. xvii.

* Suet. in vita Aug. cap. 16.

† Id. in vita Cal. cap. 5.

§ Herodot. lib. ii. Lucian. *Jupiter confutatus, de luctu Saturn.* &c.

‡ Ως ομαδὸν γεγαασι θεοι θνητοι τ' ἀνθρωποι. Heſ. Opera & Dies, l. 108.

⸸ Theog. l. 570.

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The ancient mythologiſts, indeed, ſeem throughout to have rather embraced the idea of generation than that of creation or formation; and to have thence accounted for the origin of this univerſe.

OVID, who lived in a learned age, and had been inſtructed by philoſophers in the principles of a divine creation or formation of the world; finding, that ſuch an idea would not agree with the popular mythology, which he delivers, leaves it, in a manner, looſe and detached from his ſyſtem. *Quiſquis fuit ille Deorum* *? Whichever of the gods it was, ſays he, that diſſipated the chaos, and introduced order into the univerſe. It could neither be SATURN, he knew, nor JUPITER, nor NEPTUNE, nor any of the received deities of paganiſm. His theological ſyſtem had taught him nothing upon that head; and he leaves the matter equally undetermined.

DIODORUS SICULUS †, beginning his work with an enumeration of the moſt reaſonable opinions concerning the origin of the world, makes no mention of a deity or intelligent mind; though it is evident from his hiſtory, that he had a much greater proneneſs to ſuperſtition than to irreligion. And in another paſſage ‡, talking of the ICHTHYOPHAGES, a

* Metamorph. lib. i. l. 32. † Lib. i. ‡ Id. ibid.

nation in INDIA, he ſays, that, there being ſo great difficulty in accounting for their deſcent, we muſt conclude them to be *aborigines*, without any beginning of their generation, propagating their race from all eternity; as ſome of the phyſiologers, in treating of the origin of nature, have juſtly obſerved. "But in ſuch ſubjects as theſe," adds the hiſtorian, "which exceed all human capacity, it may well "happen, that thoſe, who diſcourſe the moſt, know "the leaſt; reaching a ſpecious appearance of "truth in their reaſonings, while extremely wide "of the real truth and matter of fact."

A ſtrange ſentiment in our eyes, to be embraced by a profeſſed and zealous religioniſt*! But it was merely by accident, that the queſtion concerning the origin of the world did ever in ancient times enter into religious ſyſtems, or was treated of by theologers. The philoſophers alone made profeſſion of delivering ſyſtems of this kind; and it was pretty late too before theſe bethought themſelves of having recourſe to a mind or ſupreme intelligence, as the firſt cauſe of all. So far was it from being eſteemed profane

* The ſame author, who can thus account for the origin of the world without a Deity, eſteems it impious to explain from phyſical cauſes, the common accidents of life, earthquakes, inundations, and tempeſts; and devoutly aſcribes theſe to the anger of JUPITER or NEPTUNE. A plain proof, whence he derived his ideas of religion. See lib. xv. p. 364. Ex edit. RHODOMANNI.

in

in thoſe days to account for the origin of things without a deity, that THALES, ANAXIMENES, HERACLITUS, and others, who embraced that ſyſtem of coſmogony, paſt unqueſtioned: while ANAXAGORAS, the firſt undoubted theiſt among the philoſophers, was perhaps the firſt that ever was accuſed of atheiſm *.

We are told by SEXTUS EMPIRICUS †, that EPICURUS, when a boy, reading with his preceptor theſe verſes of HESIOD,

Eldeſt of beings, *chaos* firſt aroſe;
Next *earth*, wide-ſtretch'd, the *ſeat* of all.

the young ſcholar firſt betrayed his inquiſitive genius, by aſking, *And chaos whence?* But was told by his preceptor, that he muſt have recourſe to the philoſophers for a ſolution of ſuch queſtions. And from this hint EPICURUS left philology and all other ſtudies, in order to betake himſelf to that ſcience, whence alone he expected ſatisfaction with regard to theſe ſublime ſubjects.

The common people were never likely to puſh their reſearches ſo far, or derive from reaſoning their ſyſtems of religion; when philologers and mytho-

* See NOTE [EE].

† Adverſus MATHEM. lib. ix.

logiſts, we ſee, ſcarcely ever diſcovered ſo much penetration. And even the philoſophers, who diſcourſed of ſuch topics, readily aſſented to the groſſeſt theory, and admitted the joint origin of gods and men from night and chaos; from fire, water, air, or whatever they eſtabliſhed to be the ruling element.

Nor was it only on their firſt origin, that the gods were ſuppoſed dependent on the powers of nature. Throughout the whole period of their exiſtence they were ſubjected to the dominion of fate or deſtiny. *Think of the force of neceſſity*, ſays AGRIPPA to the ROMAN people, *that force, to which even the gods muſt ſubmit* *. And the Younger PLINY †, agreeably to this way of reaſoning, tells us, that amidſt the darkneſs, horror, and confuſion, which enſued upon the firſt eruption of VESUVIUS, ſeveral concluded, that all nature was going to wrack, and that gods and men were periſhing in one common ruin.

It is great complaiſance, indeed, if we dignify with the name of religion ſuch an imperfect ſyſtem of theology, and put it on a level with latter ſyſtems, which are founded on principles more juſt and more ſublime. For my part, I can ſcarcely allow the

* DIONYS. HALIC. lib. vi. † Epiſt. lib. vi.

principles

principles even of MARCUS AURELIUS, PLUTARCH, and ſome other *Stoics* and *Academics*, though much more refined than the pagan ſuperſtition, to be worthy of the honourable denomination of theiſm. For if the mythology of the heathens reſemble the ancient EUROPEAN ſyſtem of ſpiritual beings, excluding God and angels, and leaving only fairies and ſprights; the creed of theſe philoſophers may juſtly be ſaid to exclude a deity, and to leave only angels and fairies.

SECT. V. *Various Forms of Polytheiſm: Allegory, Hero-Worſhip.*

But it is chiefly our preſent buſineſs to conſider the groſs polytheiſm and idolatry of the vulgar, and to trace all its various appearances, in the principles of human nature, whence they are derived.

Whoever learns, by argument, the exiſtence of inviſible intelligent power, muſt reaſon from the admirable contrivance of natural objects, and muſt ſuppoſe the world to be the workmanſhip of that divine being, the original cauſe of all things. But the vulgar polytheiſt, ſo far from admitting that idea, deifies every part of the univerſe, and conceives all the conſpicuous productions of nature, to be themſelves ſo many real divinities. The ſun, moon, and ſtars, are all gods according to his ſyſtem: Foun-

tains are inhabited by nymphs, and trees by hamadryads: Even monkies, dogs, cats, and other animals often become ſacred in his eyes, and ſtrike him with a religious veneration. And thus however ſtrong men's propenſity to believe inviſible, intelligent power in nature, their propenſity is equally ſtrong to reſt their attention on ſenſible, viſible objects; and in order to reconcile theſe oppoſite inclinations, they are led to unite the inviſible power with ſome viſible object.

The diſtribution alſo of diſtinct provinces to the ſeveral deities is apt to cauſe ſome allegory, both phyſical and moral, to enter into the vulgar ſyſtems of polytheiſm. The god of war will naturally be repreſented as furious, cruel, and impetuous: The god of poetry as elegant, polite, and amiable: The god of merchandiſe, eſpecially in early times, as thieviſh and deceitful. The allegories, ſuppoſed in HOMER and other mythologiſts, I allow, have been often ſo ſtrained, that men of ſenſe are apt entirely to reject them, and to conſider them as the production merely of the fancy and conceit of critics and commentators. But that allegory really has place in the heathen mythology is undeniable even on the leaſt reflection. CUPID the ſon of VENUS; the Muſes the daughters of Memory; PROMETHEUS, the wiſe brother, and EPIMETHEUS the fooliſh; HYGIEIA or the goddeſs of health deſcended from ÆSCU-

ÆSCULAPIUS or the god of phyſic: Who ſees not, in theſe, and in many other inſtances, the plain traces of allegory? When a god is ſuppoſed to preſide over any paſſion, event, or ſyſtem of actions, it is almoſt unavoidable to give him a genealogy, attributes, and adventures, ſuitable to his ſuppoſed powers and influence; and to carry on that ſimilitude and compariſon, which is naturally ſo agreeable to the mind of man.

Allegories, indeed, entirely perfect, we ought not to expect as the products of ignorance and ſuperſtition; there being no work of genius, that requires a nicer hand, or has been more rarely executed with ſucceſs. That *Fear* and *Terror* are the ſons of MARS is juſt; but why by VENUS *? That *Harmony* is the daughter of VENUS is regular; but why by MARS †? That *Sleep* is the brother of *Death* is ſuitable; but why deſcribe him as enamoured of one of the Graces ‡? And ſince the ancient mythologiſts fall into miſtakes ſo groſs and obvious, we have no reaſon ſurely to expect ſuch refined and long-ſpun allegories, as ſome have endeavoured to deduce from their fictions.

* HESIOD. Theog. l. 935.

† Id. ibid. & PLUT. in vita PELOP.

‡ ILIAD xiv. 267.

LUCRE-

LUCRETIUS was plainly ſeduced by the ſtrong appearance of allegory, which is obſervable in the pagan fictions. He firſt addreſſes himſelf to VENUS as to that generating power, which animates, renews and beautifies the univerſe: But is ſoon betrayed by the mythology into incoherencies, while he prays to that allegorical perſonage to appeaſe the furies of her lover MARS: An idea not drawn from allegory, but from the popular religion, and which LUCRETIUS, as an EPICUREAN, could not conſiſtently admit of.

The deities of the vulgar are ſo little ſuperior to human creatures, that, where men are affected with ſtrong ſentiments of veneration or gratitude for any hero or public benefactor, nothing can be more natural than to convert him into a god, and fill the heavens, after this manner, with continual recruits from amongſt mankind. Moſt of the divinities of the ancient world are ſuppoſed to have once been men, and to have been beholden for their *apotheoſis* to the admiration and affection of the people. The real hiſtory of their adventures, corrupted by tradition, and elevated by the marvellous, became a plentiful ſource of fable; eſpecially in paſſing through the hands of poets, allegoriſts, and prieſts, who ſucceſſively improved upon the wonder and aſtoniſhment of the ignorant multitude.

Painters

Painters too and ſculptors came in for their ſhare of profit in the ſacred myſteries; and furniſhing men with ſenſible repreſentations of their divinities, whom they cloathed in human figures, gave great encreaſe to the public devotion, and determined its object. It was probably for want of theſe arts in rude and barbarous ages, that men deified plants, animals, and even brute, unorganized matter; and rather than be without a ſenſible object of worſhip, affixed divinity to ſuch ungainly forms. Could any ſtatuary of SYRIA, in early times, have formed a juſt figure of APOLLO, the conic ſtone, HELIOGABALUS, had never become the object of ſuch profound adoration, and been received as a repreſentation of the ſolar deity *.

STILPO was baniſhed by the council of AREOPAGUS, for affirming that the MINERVA in the citadel was no divinity; but the workmanſhip of PHIDIAS, the ſculptor †. What degree of reaſon muſt we expect in the religious belief of the vulgar in other nations; when ATHENIANS and AREOPAGITES could entertain ſuch groſs conceptions?

* HERODIAN. lib. v. JUPITER AMMON is repreſented by CURTIUS as a deity of the ſame kind, lib. iv cap. 7. The ARABIANS and PESSINUNTIANS adored alſo ſhapeleſs unformed ſtones as their deity. ARNOB. lib. vi. So much did their folly exceed that of the EGYPTIANS.

† DIOG. LAERT. lib. ii.

Theſe then are the general principles of polytheiſm, founded in human nature, and little or nothing dependent on caprice and accident. As the *cauſes*, which beſtow happineſs or miſery, are, in general, very little known and very uncertain, our anxious concern endeavours to attain a determinate idea of them; and finds no better expedient than to repreſent them as intelligent, voluntary agents, like ourſelves; only ſomewhat ſuperior in power and wiſdom. The limited influence of theſe agents, and their great proximity to human weakneſs, introduce the various diſtribution and diviſion of their authority; and thereby give riſe to allegory. The ſame principles naturally deify mortals, ſuperior in power, courage, or underſtanding, and produce hero-worſhip; together with fabulous hiſtory and mythological tradition, in all its wild and unaccountable forms. And as an inviſible ſpiritual intelligence is an object too refined for vulgar apprehenſion, men naturally affix it to ſome ſenſible repreſentation; ſuch as either the more conſpicuous parts of nature, or the ſtatues, images, and pictures, which a more refined age forms of its divinities.

Almoſt all idolaters, of whatever age or country, concur in theſe general principles and conceptions; and even the particular characters and provinces, which they aſſign to their deities, are not extremely different.

different *. The GREEK and ROMAN travellers and conquerors, without much difficulty, found their own deities every where; and ſaid, This is MERCURY, that VENUS; this MARS, that NEPTUNE; by whatever title the ſtrange gods might be denominated. The goddeſs HERTHA of our SAXON anceſtors ſeems to be no other, according to TACITUS †, than the *Mater Tellus* of the ROMANS; and his conjecture was evidently juſt.

SECT. VI. *Origin of Theiſm from Polytheiſm.*

The doctrine of one ſupreme deity, the author of nature, is very ancient, has ſpread itſelf over great and populous nations, and among them has been embraced by all ranks and conditions of perſons: But whoever thinks that it has owed its ſucceſs to the prevalent force of thoſe invincible reaſons, on which it is undoubtedly founded, would ſhow himſelf little acquainted with the ignorance and ſtupidity of the people, and their incurable prejudices in favour of their particular ſuperſtitions. Even at this day, and in EUROPE, aſk any of the vulgar, why he believes in an omnipotent creator of the world; he will never mention the beauty of

* See CÆSAR of the religion of the GAULS, De bello Gallico, lib. vi.

† De moribus GERM.

final

final cauſes, of which he is wholly ignorant: He will not hold out his hand, and bid you contemplate the ſuppleneſs and variety of joints in his fingers, their bending all one way, the counterpoiſe which they receive from the thumb, the ſoftneſs and fleſhy parts of the inſide of his hand, with all the other circumſtances, which render that member fit for the uſe, to which it was deſtined. To theſe he has been long accuſtomed; and he beholds them with liſtleſſneſs and unconcern. He will tell you of the ſudden and unexpected death of ſuch a one: The fall and bruiſe of ſuch another: The exceſſive drought of this ſeaſon: The cold and rains of another. Theſe he aſcribes to the immediate operation of providence: And ſuch events, as, with good reaſoners, are the chief difficulties in admitting a ſupreme intelligence, are with him the ſole arguments for it.

Many theiſts, even the moſt zealous and refined, have denied a *particular* providence, and have aſſerted, that the Sovereign mind or firſt principle of all things, having fixed general laws, by which nature is governed, gives free and uninterrupted courſe to theſe laws, and diſturbs not, at every turn, the ſettled order of events by particular volitions. From the beautiful connexion, ſay they, and rigid obſervance of eſtabliſhed rules, we draw the chief argument for theiſm; and from the ſame principles are enabled

enabled to anſwer the principal objections againſt it. But ſo little is this underſtood by the generality of mankind, that, wherever they obſerve any one to aſcribe all events to natural cauſes, and to remove the particular interpoſition of a deity, they are apt to ſuſpect him of the groſſeſt infidelity. *A little philoſophy*, ſays my lord BACON, *makes men atheiſts: A great deal reconciles them to religion:* For men, being taught, by ſuperſtitious prejudices, to lay the ſtreſs on a wrong place; when that fails them, and they diſcover, by a little reflection, that the courſe of nature is regular and uniform, their whole faith totters, and falls to ruin. But being taught, by more reflection, that this very regularity and uniformity is the ſtrongeſt proof of deſign and of a ſupreme intelligence, they return to that belief, which they had deſerted; and they are now able to eſtabliſh it on a firmer and more durable foundation.

Convulſions in nature, diſorders, prodigies, miracles, though the moſt oppoſite to the plan of a wiſe ſuperintendent, impreſs mankind with the ſtrongeſt ſentiments of religion; the cauſes of events ſeeming then the moſt unknown and unaccountable. Madneſs, fury, rage, and an inflamed imagination, tho' they ſink men neareſt the level of beaſts, are, for a like reaſon, often ſuppoſed to be the only diſpoſitions, in which we can have any immediate communication with the Deity.

We may conclude, therefore, upon the whole, that, ſince the vulgar, in nations, which have embraced the doctrine of theiſm, ſtill build it upon irrational and ſuperſtitious opinions, they are never led into that opinion by any proceſs of argument, but by a certain train of thinking, more ſuitable to their genius and capacity.

It may readily happen, in an idolatrous nation, that, though men admit the exiſtence of ſeveral limited deities, yet is there ſome one God, whom, in a particular manner, they make the object of their worſhip and adoration. They may either ſuppoſe, that, in the diſtribution of power and territory among the gods, their nation was ſubjected to the juriſdiction of that particular deity; or reducing heavenly objects to the model of things below, they may repreſent one god as the prince or ſupreme magiſtrate of the reſt, who, though of the ſame nature, rules them with an authority, like that which an earthly ſovereign exerciſes over his ſubjects and vaſſals. Whether this god, therefore, be conſidered as their peculiar patron, or as the general ſovereign of heaven, his votaries will endeavour, by every art, to inſinuate themſelves into his favour; and ſuppoſing him to be pleaſed, like themſelves, with praiſe and flattery, there is no eulogy or exaggeration, which will be ſpared in their addreſſes to him. In proportion as men's fears or diſtreſſes become

more urgent, they ſtill invent new ſtrains of adulation; and even he who outdoes his predeceſſors in ſwelling up the titles of his divinity, is ſure to be outdone by his ſucceſſors in newer and more pompous epithets of praiſe. Thus they proceed; till at laſt they arrive at infinity itſelf, beyond which there is no farther progreſs: And it is well, if, in ſtriving to get farther, and to repreſent a magnificent ſimplicity, they run not into inexplicable myſtery, and deſtroy the intelligent nature of their deity, on which alone any rational worſhip or adoration can be founded. While they confine themſelves to the notion of a perfect being, the creator of the world, they coincide, by chance, with the principles of reaſon and true philoſophy; though they are guided to that notion, not by reaſon, of which they are in a great meaſure incapable, but by the adulation and fears of the moſt vulgar ſuperſtition.

We often find, amongſt barbarous nations, and even ſometimes amongſt civilized, that, when every ſtrain of flattery has been exhauſted towards arbitrary princes, when every human quality has been applauded to the utmoſt; their ſervile courtiers repreſent them, at laſt, as real divinities, and point them out to the people as objects of adoration. How much more natural, therefore, is it, that a limited deity, who at firſt is ſuppoſed only the immediate author of the particular goods and ills in life, ſhould

in the end be repreſented as ſovereign maker and modifier of the univerſe?

Even where this notion of a ſupreme deity is already eſtabliſhed; though it ought naturally to leſſen every other worſhip, and abaſe every object of reverence, yet if a nation has entertained the opinion of a ſubordinate tutelar divinity, ſaint, or angel; their addreſſes to that being gradually riſe upon them, and encroach on the adoration due to their ſupreme deity. The Virgin *Mary*, ere checked by the reformation, had proceeded, from being merely a good woman, to uſurp many attributes of the Almighty: God and St. NICHOLAS go hand in hand, in all the prayers and petitions of the MUSCOVITES.

Thus the deity, who, from love, converted himſelf into a bull, in order to carry off EUROPA; and who, from ambition dethroned his father, SATURN, became the OPTIMUS MAXIMUS of the heathens. Thus, the God of ABRAHAM, ISAAC, and JACOB, became the ſupreme deity or JEHOVAH of the JEWS.

The JACOBINS, who denied the immaculate conception, have ever been very unhappy in their doctrine, even though political reaſons have kept the ROMISH church from condemning it. The CORDELIERS have run away with all the popularity.

But

But in the fifteenth century, as we learn from BOULAINVILLIERS *, an ITALIAN *Cordelier* maintained, that, during the three days, when CHRIST was interred, the hypoſtatic union was diſſolved, and that his human nature was not a proper object of adoration, during that period. Without the art of divination, one might foretel, that ſo groſs and impious a blaſphemy would not fail to be anathematized by the people. It was the occaſion of great inſults on the part of the JACOBINS; who now got ſome recompence for their misfortunes in the war about the immaculate conception.

Rather than relinquiſh this propenſity to adulation, religioniſts, in all ages, have involved themſelves in the greateſt abſurdities and contradictions.

HOMER, in one paſſage, calls OCEANUS and TETHYS the original parents of all things, conformably to the eſtabliſhed mythology and tradition of the GREEKS: Yet, in other paſſages, he could not forbear complimenting JUPITER, the reigning deity, with that magnificent appellation; and accordingly denominates him the father of gods and men. He forgets, that every temple, every ſtreet was full of the anceſtors, uncles, brothers and ſiſters of this JUPITER; who was in reality nothing but an upſtart

* Hiſtoire abregée, p. 499.

parricide and uſurper. A like contradiction is obſervable in HESIOD; and is ſo much the leſs excuſable, as his profeſſed intention was to deliver a true genealogy of the gods.

Were there a religion (and we may ſuſpect Mahometaniſm of this inconſiſtence) which ſometimes painted the Deity in the moſt ſublime colours, as the creator of heaven and earth; ſometimes degraded him nearly to a level with human creatures in his powers and faculties; while at the ſame time it aſcribed to him ſuitable infirmities, paſſions, and partialities of the moral kind: That religion, after it was extinct, would alſo be cited as an inſtance of thoſe contradictions, which ariſe from the groſs, vulgar, natural conceptions of mankind, oppoſed to their continual propenſity towards flattery and exaggeration. Nothing indeed would prove more ſtrongly the divine origin of any religion, than to find (and happily this is the caſe with Chriſtianity) that it is free from a contradiction, ſo incident to human nature.

SECT. VII. *Confirmation of this Doctrine.*

It appears certain, that though the original notions of the vulgar repreſent the Divinity as a limited being, and conſider him only as the particular cauſe of health or ſickneſs; plenty or want; proſperity or

or adverſity; yet when more magnificent ideas are urged upon them, they eſteem it dangerous to refuſe their aſſent. Will you ſay, that your deity is finite and bounded in his perfections; may be overcome by a greater force; is ſubject to human paſſions, pains, and infirmities; has a beginning, and may have an end? This they dare not affirm; but thinking it ſafeſt to comply with the higher encomiums, they endeavour, by an affected raviſhment and devotion to ingratiate themſelves with him. As a confirmation of this, we may obſerve, that the aſſent of the vulgar is, in this caſe, merely verbal, and that they are incapable of conceiving thoſe ſublime qualities, which they ſeemingly attribute to the Deity. Their real idea of him, notwithſtanding their pompous language, is ſtill as poor and frivolous as ever.

That original intelligence, ſay the MAGIANS, who is the firſt principle of all things, diſcovers himſelf *immediately* to the mind and underſtanding alone; but has placed the ſun as his image in the viſible univerſe; and when that bright luminary diffuſes its beams over the earth and the firmament, it is a faint copy of the glory, which reſides in the higher heavens. If you would eſcape the diſpleaſure of this divine being, you muſt be careful never to ſet your bare foot upon the ground, nor ſpit into a fire, nor throw any water upon it, even though it were con-

ſuming a whole city *. Who can expreſs the perfections of the Almighty? ſay the Mahometans. Even the nobleſt of his works, if compared to him, are but duſt and rubbiſh. How much more muſt human conception fall ſhort of his infinite perfections? His ſmile and favour renders men for ever happy; and to obtain it for your children, the beſt method is to cut off from them while infants, a little bit of ſkin, about half the breadth of a farthing. Take two bits of cloth †, ſay the *Roman catholics*, about an inch or an inch and an half ſquare, join them by the corners with two ſtrings or pieces of tape about ſixteen inches long, throw this over your head, and make one of the bits of cloth lie upon your breaſt, and the other upon your back, keeping them next your ſkin; there is not a better ſecret for recommending yourſelf to that infinite Being, who exiſts from eternity to eternity.

The GETES, commonly called immortal, from their ſteady belief of the ſoul's immortality, were genuine theiſts and unitarians. They affirmed ZAMOLXIS, their deity, to be the only true god; and aſſerted the worſhip of all other nations to be addreſſed to mere fictions and chimeras. But were their religious principles any more refined, on ac-

* HYDE de Relig. veterum PERSARUM.

† Called the Scapulaire.

count

count of theſe magnificent pretenſions? Every fifth year they ſacrificed a human victim, whom they ſent as a meſſenger to their deity, in order to inform him of their wants and neceſſities. And when it thundered, they were ſo provoked, that, in order to return the defiance, they let fly arrows at him, and declined not the combat as unequal. Such at leaſt is the account, which HERODOTUS gives of the theiſm of the immortal GETES *.

SECT. VIII. *Flux and reflux of polytheiſm and theiſm.*

It is remarkable, that the principles of religion have a kind of flux and reflux in the human mind, and that men have a natural tendency to riſe from idolatry to theiſm, and to ſink again from theiſm into idolatry. The vulgar, that is, indeed, all mankind, a few excepted, being ignorant and uninſtructed, never elevate their contemplation to the heavens, or penetrate by their diſquiſitions into the ſecret ſtructure of vegetable or animal bodies; ſo as to diſcover a ſupreme mind or original providence, which beſtowed order on every part of nature. They conſider theſe admirable works in a more confined and ſelfiſh view; and finding their own happineſs and miſery to depend on the ſecret influence and unforeſeen concurrence of external objects, they

* Lib. iv.

regard,

regard, with perpetual attention, the *unknown cauſes*, which govern all theſe natural events, and diſtribute pleaſure and pain, good and ill, by their powerful, but ſilent, operation. The unknown cauſes are ſtill appealed to on every emergence; and in this general appearance or confuſed image, are the perpetual objects of human hopes and fears, wiſhes and apprehenſions. By degrees, the active imagination of men, uneaſy in this abſtract conception of objects, about which it is inceſſantly employed, begins to render them more particular, and to clothe them in ſhapes more ſuitable to its natural comprehenſion. It repreſents them to be ſenſible, intelligent beings, like mankind; actuated by love and hatred, and flexible by gifts and entreaties, by prayers and ſacrifices. Hence the origin of religion: And hence the origin of idolatry or polytheiſm.

But the ſame anxious concern for happineſs, which begets the idea of theſe inviſible, intelligent powers, allows not mankind to remain long in the firſt ſimple conception of them; as powerful, but limited beings; maſters of human fate, but ſlaves to deſtiny and the courſe of nature. Men's exaggerated praiſes and compliments ſtill ſwell their idea upon them; and elevating their deities to the utmoſt bounds of perfection, at laſt beget the attributes of unity and infinity, ſimplicity and ſpirituality. Such refined ideas, being ſomewhat diſproportioned

portioned to vulgar comprehenſion, remain not long in their original purity; but require to be ſupported by the notion of inferior mediators or ſubordinate agents, which interpoſe between mankind and their ſupreme deity. Theſe demi-gods or middle beings, partaking more of human nature, and being more familiar to us, become the chief objects of devotion, and gradually recal that idolatry, which had been formerly baniſhed by the ardent prayers and panegyrics of timorous and indigent mortals. But as theſe idolatrous religions fall every day into groſſer and more vulgar conceptions, they at laſt deſtroy themſelves, and, by the vile repreſentations, which they form of their deities, make the tide turn again towards theiſm. But ſo great is the propenſity, in this alternate revolution of human ſentiments, to return back to idolatry, that the utmoſt precaution is not able effectually to prevent it. And of this, ſome theiſts, particularly the JEWS and MAHOMETANS, have been ſenſible; as appears by their baniſhing all the arts of ſtatuary and painting, and not allowing the repreſentations, even of human figures, to be taken by marble or colours; leſt the common infirmity of mankind ſhould thence produce idolatry. The feeble apprehenſions of men cannot be ſatisfied with conceiving their deity as a pure ſpirit and perfect intelligence; and yet their natural terrors keep them from imputing to him the leaſt ſhadow of limitation and imperfection. They

fluctuate

fluctuate between theſe oppoſite ſentiments. The ſame infirmity ſtill drags them downwards, from an omnipotent and ſpiritual deity, to a limited and corporeal one, and from a corporeal and limited deity to a ſtatue or viſible repreſentation. The ſame endeavour at elevation ſtill puſhes them upwards, from the ſtatue or material image to the inviſible power; and from the inviſible power to an infinitely perfect deity, the creator and ſovereign of the univerſe.

SECT. IX. *Compariſon of theſe Religions, with regard to Perſecution and Toleration.*

Polytheiſm or idolatrous worſhip, being founded entirely in vulgar traditions, is liable to this great inconvenience, that any practice or opinion, however barbarous or corrupted, may be authorized by it; and full ſcope is left for knavery to impoſe on credulity, till morals and humanity be expelled from the religious ſyſtems of mankind. At the ſame time, idolatry is attended with this evident advantage, that, by limiting the powers and functions of its deities, it naturally admits the gods of other ſects and nations to a ſhare of divinity, and renders all the various deities, as well as rites, ceremonies, or traditions, compatible with each other †. Theiſm

† See NOTE [FF].

is

is oppoſite both in its advantages and diſadvantages. As that ſyſtem ſuppoſes one ſole deity, the perfection of reaſon and goodneſs, it ſhould, if juſtly proſecuted, baniſh every thing frivolous, unreaſonable, or inhuman from religious worſhip, and ſet before men the moſt illuſtrious example, as well as the moſt commanding motives of juſtice and benevolence. Theſe mighty advantages are not indeed over-balanced, (for that is not poſſible) but ſomewhat diminiſhed, by inconveniencies, which ariſe from the vices and prejudices of mankind. While one ſole object of devotion is acknowledged, the worſhip of other deities is regarded as abſurd and impious. Nay, this unity of object ſeems naturally to require the unity of faith and ceremonies, and furniſhes deſigning men with a pretence for repreſenting their adverſaries as profane, and the objects of divine as well as human vengeance. For as each ſect is poſitive that its own faith and worſhip are entirely acceptable to the deity and as no one can conceive, that the ſame being ſhould be pleaſed with different and oppoſite rites and principles; the ſeveral ſects fall naturally into animoſity, and mutually diſcharge on each other that ſacred zeal and rancour, the moſt furious and implacable of all human paſſions.

The tolerating ſpirit of idolaters, both in ancient and modern times, is very obvious to any one, who is the leaſt converſant in the writings of hiſtorians or travellers.

travellers. When the oracle of DELPHI was aſked, what rites or worſhip was moſt acceptable to the gods? Thoſe legally eſtabliſhed in each city, replied the oracle *. Even prieſts, in thoſe ages, could, it ſeems, allow ſalvation to thoſe of a different communion. The ROMANS commonly adopted the gods of the conquered people; and never diſputed the attributes of thoſe topical and national deities, in whoſe territories they reſided. The religious wars and perſecutions of the EGYPTIAN idolaters are indeed an exception to this rule; but are accounted for by ancient authors from reaſons ſingular and remarkable. Different ſpecies of animals were the deities of the different ſects among the EGYPTIANS; and the deities being in continual war, engaged their votaries in the ſame contention. The worſhippers of dogs could not long remain in peace with the adorers of cats or wolves †. But where that reaſon took not place, the EGYPTIAN ſuperſtition was not ſo incompatible as is commonly imagined; ſince we learn from HERODOTUS ‡, that very large contributions were given by AMASIS towards rebuilding the temple of DELPHI.

The intolerance of almoſt all religions, which have maintained the unity of God, is as remarkable

* Xenoph. Memor. lib. ii.

† Plutarch. de Iſid. & Oſiride.

‡ Lib. ii. ſub fine.

as

as the contrary principle of polytheiſts. The implacable narrow ſpirit of the JEWS is well known. MAHOMETANISM ſet out with ſtill more bloody principles; and even to this day, deals out damnation, though not fire and faggot, to all other ſects. And if, among CHRISTIANS, the ENGLISH and DUTCH have embraced the principles of toleration, this ſingularity has proceeded from the ſteady reſolution of the civil magiſtrate, in oppoſition to the continued efforts of prieſt and bigots.

The diſciples of ZOROASTER ſhut the doors of heaven againſt all but the MAGIANS *. Nothing could more obſtruct the progreſs of the PERSIAN conqueſts, than the furious zeal of that nation againſt the temples and images of the GREEKS. And after the overthrow of that empire, we find ALEXANDER, as a polytheiſt, immediately re-eſtabliſhing the worſhip of the BABYLONIANS, which their former princes, as monotheiſts, had carefully aboliſhed †. Even the blind and devoted attachment of that conqueror to the GREEK ſuperſtition hindered not but he himſelf ſacrificed according to the BABYLONISH rites and ceremonies ‡.

* Hyde de Relig. vet. Perſarum.

† Arrian. de Exped. lib. iii. Id. lib. vii.

‡ Id. ibid.

So

So ſociable is polytheiſm, that the utmoſt fierceneſs and averſion, which it meets with in an oppoſite religion, is ſcarcely able to diſguſt it, and keep it at a diſtance. Auguſtus praiſed extremely the reſerve of his grandſon, CAIUS CÆSAR, when this latter prince, paſſing by JERUSALEM, deigned not to ſacrifice according to the JEWISH law. But for what reaſon did AUGUSTUS ſo much approve of this conduct? Only, becauſe that religion was by the PAGANS eſteemed ignoble and barbarous *.

I may venture to affirm, that few corruptions of idolatry and polytheiſm are more pernicious to political ſociety than this corruption of theiſm †, when carried to the utmoſt height. The human ſacrifices of the CARTHAGINIANS, MEXICANS, and many barbarous nations ‡, ſcarcely exceed the inquiſition and perſecutions of ROME and MADRID. For beſides, that the effuſion of blood may not be ſo great in the former caſe as in the latter; beſides this, I ſay, the human victims, being choſen by lot, or by ſome exterior ſigns, affect not, in ſo conſiderable a degree, the reſt of the ſociety. Whereas virtue, knowledge, love of liberty, are the qualities, which call down the fatal vengeance of inquiſitors; and when

* Sueton. in vita Aug. c. 93.

† *Corruptio optimi peſſima.*

‡ See NOTE [GG].

expelled,

expelled, leave the ſociety in the moſt ſhameful ignorance, corruption, and bondage. The illegal murder of one man by a tyrant is more pernicious than the death of a thouſand by peſtilence, famine, or any undiſtinguiſhing calamity.

In the temple of DIANA at ARICIA near ROME, whoever murdered the preſent prieſt, was legally entitled to be inſtalled his ſucceſſor ‡. A very ſingular inſtitution! For, however barbarous and bloody the common ſuperſtitions often are to the laity, they uſually turn to the advantage of the holy order.

SECT. X. *With regard to courage or abaſement.*

From the compariſon of theiſm and idolatry, we may form ſome other obſervations, which will alſo confirm the vulgar obſervation, that the corruption of the beſt things gives riſe to the worſt.

Where the deity is repreſented as infinitely ſuperior to mankind, this belief, though altogether juſt, is apt, when joined with ſuperſtitious terrors, to ſink the human mind into the loweſt ſubmiſſion and abaſement, and to repreſent the monkiſh virtues of mortification, penance, humility, and paſſive

‡ Strabo, lib. v. Sueton. in vita Cal.

ſuffering, as the only qualities which are acceptable to him. But where the gods are conceived to be only a little ſuperior to mankind, and to have been, many of them, advanced from that inferior rank, we are more at our eaſe in our addreſſes to them, and may even, without profaneneſs, aſpire ſometimes to a rivalſhip and emulation of them. Hence activity, ſpirit, courage, magnanimity, love of liberty, and all the virtues which aggrandize a people.

The heroes in paganiſm correſpond exactly to the ſaints in popery and holy derviſes in MAHOMETANISM. The place of HERCULES, THESEUS, HECTOR, ROMULUS, is now ſupplied by DOMINIC, FRANCIS, ANTHONY, and BENEDICT. Inſtead of the deſtruction of monſters, the ſubduing of tyrants, the defence of our native country; whippings and faſtings, cowardice and humility, abject ſubmiſſion and ſlaviſh obedience, are become the means of obtaining celeſtial honours among mankind.

One great incitement to the pious ALEXANDER in his warlike expeditions was his rivalſhip of HERCULES and BACCHUS, whom he juſtly pretended to have excelled †. BRASIDAS, that generous and noble SPARTAN, after falling in battle, had heroic honours paid him by the inhabitants of AMPHI-

† Arian. paſſim.

POLIS,

POLIS, whoſe defence he had embraced ‡. And in general, all founders of ſtates and colonies amongſt the GREEKS were raiſed to this inferior rank of divinity, by thoſe who reaped the benefit of their labours.

This gave riſe to the obſervation of MACHIAVEL †, that the doctrines of the CHRISTIAN religion (meaning the catholic; for he knew no other) which recommend only paſſive courage and ſuffering, had ſubdued the ſpirit of mankind, and had fitted them for ſlavery and ſubjection. An obſervation, which would certainly be juſt, were there not many other circumſtances in human ſociety which controul the genius and character of a religion.

BRASIDAS ſeized a mouſe, and being bit by it, let it go. *There is nothing ſo contemptible*, ſays he, *but what may be ſafe, if it has but courage to defend itſelf* *. BELLARMINE patiently and humbly allowed the fleas and other odious vermin to prey upon him. *We ſhall have heaven*, ſays he, *to reward us for our ſufferings: But theſe poor creatures have nothing but the enjoyment of the preſent life* ||. Such difference is there between the maxims of a GREEK hero and a CATHOLIC ſaint.

‡ Thucyd. lib. v. † Diſcorſi, lib. vi.
* Plut. Apopth. || Bayle, Article BELLARMINE.

SECT. XI. *With regard to reaſon or abſurdity.*

Here is another obſervation to the ſame purpoſe, and a new proof that the corruption of the beſt things begets the worſt. If we examine, without prejudice, the ancient heathen mythology, as contained in the poets, we ſhall not diſcover in it any ſuch monſtrous abſurdity, as we may be apt at firſt to apprehend. Where is the difficulty of conceiving, that the ſame powers or principles, whatever they were, which formed this viſible world, men and animals, produced alſo a ſpecies of intelligent creatures, of more refined ſubſtance and greater authority than the reſt? That theſe creatures may be capricious, revengeful, paſſionate, voluptuous, is eaſily conceived; nor is any circumſtance more apt, among ourſelves, to engender ſuch vices, than the licence of abſolute authority. And in ſhort, the whole mythological ſyſtem is ſo natural, that in the vaſt variety of planets and worlds, contained in this univerſe, it ſeems more than probable, that, ſomewhere or other, it is really carried into execution.

The chief objection to it with regard to this planet, is, that it is not aſcertained by any juſt reaſon or authority. The ancient tradition, inſiſted on by heathen prieſts and theologers, is but a weak foundation;

dation; and tranſmitted alſo ſuch a number of contradictory reports, ſupported, all of them, by equal authority, that it became abſolutely impoſſible to fix a preference amongſt them. A few volumes, therefore, muſt contain all the polemical writings of pagan prieſts: Their whole theology muſt conſiſt more of traditional ſtories and ſuperſtitious practices than of philoſophical argument and controverſy.

But where theiſm forms the fundamental principle of any popular religion, that tenet is ſo conformable to ſound reaſon, that philoſophy is apt to incorporate itſelf with ſuch a ſyſtem of theology. And if the other dogmas of that ſyſtem be contained in a ſacred book, ſuch as the Alcoran, or be determined by any viſible authority, like that of the ROMAN pontif, ſpeculative reaſoners naturally carry on their aſſent, and embrace a theory, which has been inſtilled into them by their earlieſt education, and which alſo poſſeſſes ſome degree of conſiſtence and uniformity. But as theſe appearances are ſure, all of them, to prove deceitful, philoſophy will ſoon find herſelf, very unequally yoaked with her new aſſociate; and inſtead of regulating each principle, as they advance together, ſhe is at every turn perverted to ſerve the purpoſes of ſuperſtition. For beſides the unavoidable incoherences, which muſt be reconciled and adjuſted; one may ſafely affirm, that all

popular theology, eſpecially the ſcholaſtic, has a kind of appetite for abſurdity and contradiction. If that theology went not beyond reaſon and common ſenſe, her doctrines would appear too eaſy and familiar. Amazement muſt of neceſſity be raiſed: Myſtery affected: Darkneſs and obſcurity ſought after: And a foundation of merit afforded the devout votaries, who deſire an opportunity of ſubduing their rebellious reaſon, by the belief of the moſt unintelligible ſophiſms.

Eccleſiaſtical hiſtory ſufficiently confirms theſe reflections. When a controverſy is ſtarted, ſome people pretend always with certainty to foretell the iſſue. Which ever opinion, ſay they, is moſt contrary to plain ſenſe is ſure to prevail; even where the general intereſt of the ſyſtem requires not that deciſion. Though the reproach of hereſy may, for ſome time, be bandied about among the diſputants, it always reſts at laſt on the ſide of reaſon. Any one, it is pretended, that has but learning enough of this kind to know the definition of ARIAN, PELAGIAN, ERASTIAN, SOCINIAN, SABELLIAN, EUTYCHIAN, NESTORIAN, MONOTHELITE, &c. not to mention PROTESTANT, whoſe fate is yet uncertain, will be convinced of the truth of this obſervation. It is thus a ſyſtem becomes more abſurd in the end, merely from its being reaſonable and philoſophical in the beginning.

To

To oppoſe the torrent of ſcholaſtic religion by ſuch feeble maxims as theſe, that *it is impoſſible for the ſame to be and not to be*, that *the whole is greater than a part*, that *two and three make five*; is pretending to ſtop the ocean with a bull-ruſh. Will you ſet up profane reaſon againſt ſacred myſtery? No puniſhment is great enough for your impiety. And the ſame fires, which were kindled for heretics, will ſerve alſo for the deſtruction of philoſophers.

SECT. XII. *With regard to Doubt or Conviction.*

We meet every day with people ſo ſceptical with regard to hiſtory, that they aſſert it impoſſible for any nation ever to believe ſuch abſurd principles as thoſe of GREEK and EGYPTIAN paganiſm; and at the ſame time ſo dogmatical with regard to religion, that they think the ſame abſurdities are to be found in no other communion. CAMBYSES entertained like prejudices; and very impiouſly ridiculed, and even wounded, APIS, the great god of the EGYPTIANS, who appeared to his profane ſenſes nothing but a large ſpotted bull. But HERODOTUS * judiciouſly aſcribes this ſally of paſſion to a real madneſs or diſorder of the brain: Otherwiſe, ſays the hiſtorian, he never would have openly affronted any eſtabliſhed worſhip. For on that head, continues

* Lib. iii. c. 38.

he, every nation are beſt ſatisfied with their own, and think they have the advantage over every other nation.

It muſt be allowed, that the ROMAN Catholics are a very learned ſect; and that no one communion, but that of the church of ENGLAND, can diſpute their being the moſt learned of all the Chriſtian churches: Yet AVERROES, the famous ARABIAN, who, no doubt, had heard of the EGYPTIAN ſuperſtitions, declares, that, of all religions, the moſt abſurd and nonſenſical is that, whoſe votaries eat, after having created, their deity.

I believe, indeed, that there is no tenet in all paganiſm, which would give ſo fair a ſcope to ridicule as this of the *real preſence:* For it is ſo abſurd, that it eludes the force of all argument. There are even ſome pleaſant ſtories of that kind, which, though ſomewhat profane, are commonly told by the Catholics themſelves. One day, a prieſt, it is ſaid, gave inadvertently, inſtead of the ſacrament, a counter, which had by accident fallen among the holy wafers. The communicant waited patiently for ſome time, expecting it would diſſolve on his tongue: But finding that it ſtill remained entire, he took it off. *I wiſh*, cried he to the prieſt, *you have not committed ſome miſtake: I wiſh you have not given me*

God

God the Father: He is ſo hard and tough there is no ſwallowing him.

A famous general, at that time in the MUSCOVITE ſervice, having come to PARIS for the recovery of his wounds, brought along with him a young TURK, whom he had taken priſoner. Some of the doctors of the SORBONNE (who are altogether as poſitive as the derviſes of CONSTANTINOPLE) thinking it a pity, that the poor TURK ſhould be damned for want of inſtruction, ſolicited MUSTAPHA very hard to turn Chriſtian, and promiſed him for his encouragement, plenty of good wine in this world, and paradiſe in the next. Theſe allurements were too powerful to be reſiſted; and therefore, having been well inſtructed and catechized, he at laſt agreed to receive the ſacraments of baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper. The prieſt, however, to make every thing ſure and ſolid, ſtill continued his inſtructions; and began the next day with the uſual queſtion, *How many Gods are there? None at all,* replies BENEDICT; for that was his new name. *How! None at all!* cries the prieſt. *To be ſure,* ſaid the honeſt proſelyte. *You have told me all along that there is but one God: And yeſterday I eat him.*

Such are the doctrines of our brethren the Catholics. But to theſe doctrines we are ſo accuſtomed, that we never wonder at them: Though in a future

age,

age, it will probably become difficult to perſuade ſome nations, that any human, two-legged creature could ever embrace ſuch principles. And it is a thouſand to one, but theſe nations themſelves ſhall have ſomething full as abſurd in their own creed, to which they will give a moſt implicite and moſt religious aſſent.

I lodged once at PARIS, in the ſame *hotel* with an embaſſador from TUNIS, who, having paſſed ſome years at LONDON, was returning home that way. One day I obſerved his MOORISH excellency diverting himſelf under the porch, with ſurveying the ſplendid equipages that drove along; when there chanced to paſs that way ſome *Capucin* friars, who had never ſeen a TURK; as he, on his part, though accuſtomed to the EUROPEAN dreſſes, had never ſeen the groteſque figure of a *Capucin*: And there is no expreſſing the mutual admiration, with which they inſpired each other. Had the chaplain of the embaſſy entered into a diſpute with theſe FRANCISCANS, their reciprocal ſurprize had been of the ſame nature. Thus all mankind ſtand ſtaring at one another; and there is no beating it out of their heads, that the turban of the AFRICAN is not juſt as good or as bad a faſhion as the cowl of the EUROPEAN. *He is a very honeſt man*, ſaid the prince of SALLEE, ſpeaking of de RUYTER, *It is a pity he were a Chriſtian.*

How

How can you worſhip leeks and onions? we ſhall ſuppoſe a SORBONNIST to ſay to a prieſt of SAIS. If we worſhip them, replies the latter; at leaſt, we do not, at the ſame time, eat them. But what ſtrange objects of adoration are cats and monkies? ſays the learned doctor. They are at leaſt as good as the relicts or rotten bones of martyrs, anſwers his no leſs learned antagoniſt. Are you not mad, inſiſts the Catholic, to cut one another's throat about the preference of a cabbage or a cucumber? Yes, ſays the pagan; I allow it, if you will confeſs, that thoſe are ſtill madder, who fight about the preference among volumes of ſophiſtry, ten thouſand of which are not equal in value to one cabbage or cucumber *.

Every by-ſtander will eaſily judge (but unfortunately the by-ſtanders are few) that, if nothing were requiſite to eſtabliſh any popular ſyſtem, but expoſing the abſurdities of other ſyſtems, every votary of every ſuperſtition could give a ſufficient reaſon for his blind and bigotted attachment to the principles, in which he has been educated. But without ſo extenſive a knowledge, on which to ground this aſſurance, (and perhaps, better without it) there is not wanting a ſufficient ſtock of religious zeal and faith amongſt mankind. DIODORUS SICULUS ‡ gives a

* See NOTE [HH].

‡ Lib. i.

remarkable

remarkable inſtance to this purpoſe, of which he was himſelf an eye-witneſs. While EGYPT lay under the greateſt terror of the ROMAN name, a legionary ſoldier having inadvertently been guilty of the ſacrilegious impiety of killing a cat, the whole people roſe upon him with the utmoſt fury; and all the efforts of the prince were not able to ſave him. The ſenate and people of ROME, I am perſuaded, would not, then, have been ſo delicate with regard to their national deities. They very frankly, a little after that time, voted AUGUSTUS a place in the celeſtial manſions; and would have dethroned every god in heaven, for his ſake, had he ſeemed to deſire it. *Preſens divus habebitur* AUGUSTUS, ſays HORACE. That is a very important point: And in other nations and other ages, the ſame circumſtance has not been eſteemed altogether indifferent *.

Notwithſtanding the ſanctity of our holy religion, ſays TULLY †, no crime is more common with us than ſacrilege: But was it ever heard of, that an EGYPTIAN violated the temple of a cat, an ibis, or

* When LOUIS the XIVth took on himſelf the protection of the Jeſuits' college of CLERMONT, the ſociety ordered the king's arms to be put up over the gate, and took down the croſs, in order to make way for it: Which gave occaſion to the following epigram:

Suſtulit hinc Chriſti, poſuitque inſignia Regis:
Impia gens, alium neſcit habere Deum.

† De nat. Deor, l. i.

a cro-

a crocodile? There is no torture, an EGYPTIAN would not undergo, ſays the ſame author in another place ‡, rather than injure an ibis, an aſpic, a cat, a dog, or a crocodile. Thus it is ſtrictly true, what DRYDEN obſerves,

" Of whatſoe'er deſcent their godhead be,
" Stock, ſtone, or other homely pedigree,
" In his defence his ſervants are as bold,
" As if he had been born of beaten gold."
ABSALOM and ACHITOPHEL.

Nay, the baſer the materials are, of which the divinity is compoſed, the greater devotion is he likely to excite in the breaſts of his deluded votaries. They exult in their ſhame, and make a merit with their deity, in braving, for his ſake, all the ridicule and contumely of his enemies. Ten thouſand Cruſaders inliſt themſelves under the holy banners; and even openly triumph in thoſe parts of their religion, which their adverſaries regard as the moſt reproachful.

There occurs, I own, a difficulty in the EGYPTIAN ſyſtem of theology; as indeed, few ſyſtems are entirely free from difficulties. It is evident, from their method of propagation, that a couple of

‡ Tuſc. Quæſt. lib. v.

cats,

cats, in fifty years, would ſtock a whole kingdom; and if that religious veneration were ſtill paid them, it would, in twenty more, not only be eaſier in EGYPT to find a god than a man, which PETRONIUS ſays was the caſe in ſome parts of ITALY; but the gods muſt at laſt entirely ſtarve the men, and leave themſelves neither prieſts nor votaries remaining. It is probable, therefore, that this wiſe nation, the moſt celebrated in antiquity for prudence and ſound policy, foreſeeing ſuch dangerous conſequences, reſerved all their worſhip for the full-grown divinities, and uſed the freedom to drown the holy ſpawn or little ſucking gods, without any ſcruple or remorſe. And thus the practice of warping the tenets of religion, in order to ſerve temporal intereſts, is not, by any means, to be regarded as an invention of theſe latter ages.

The learned, philoſophical VARRO, diſcourſing of religion, pretends not to deliver any thing beyond probabilities and appearances: Such was his good ſenſe and moderation! But the paſſionate, the zealous AUGUSTIN, inſults the noble ROMAN on his ſcepticiſm and reſerve, and profeſſes the moſt thorough belief and aſſurance †. A heathen poet, however, contemporary with the ſaint, abſurdly

† De civitate Dei, l. iii. c. 17.

eſteems the religious ſyſtem of the latter ſo falſe, that even the credulity of children, he ſays, could not engage them to believe it *.

Is it ſtrange, when miſtakes are ſo common, to find every one poſitive and dogmatical? And that the zeal often riſes in proportion to the error? *Moverunt*, ſays SPARTIAN, *& ea tempeſtate Judæi bellum quod vetabantur mutilare genitalia* †.

If ever there was a nation or a time, in which the public religion loſt all authority over mankind, we might expect, that infidelity in ROME, during the CICERONEAN age would openly have erected its throne, and that CICERO himſelf, in every ſpeech and action, would have been its moſt declared abettor. But it appears, that, whatever ſceptical liberties that great man might uſe, in his writings or in philoſophical converſation; he yet avoided, in the common conduct of life, the imputation of deiſm and profaneneſs. Even in his own family, and to his wife TERENTIA, whom he highly truſted, he was willing to appear a devout religioniſt; and there remains a letter, addreſſed to her, in which he ſeriouſly deſires her to offer ſacrifice to APOLLO and ÆSCULAPIUS, in gratitude for the recovery of his health ‡.

* Claudii Rutilii Numitiani iter, lib. i. l. 386.

† In vita Adriani. ‡ Lib. xiv. epiſt. 7.

POMPEY's

POMPEY's devotion was much more ſincere: In all his conduct, during the civil wars, he paid a great regard to auguries, dreams, and propheſies *. AUGUSTUS was tainted with ſuperſtition of every kind. As it is reported of MILTON, that his poetical genius never flowed with eaſe and abundance in the ſpring; ſo AUGUSTUS obſerved, that his own genius for dreaming never was ſo perfect during that ſeaſon, nor was ſo much to be relied on, as during the reſt of the year. That great and able emperor was alſo extremely uneaſy, when he happened to change his ſhoes, and put the right foot ſhoe on the left foot †. In ſhort, it cannot be doubted, but the votaries of the eſtabliſhed ſuperſtition of antiquity were as numerous in every ſtate, as thoſe of the modern religion are at preſent. Its influence was as univerſal; though it was not ſo great. As many people gave their aſſent to it; though that aſſent was not ſeemingly ſo ſtrong, preciſe, and affirmative.

We may obſerve, that, notwithſtanding the dogmatical, imperious ſtyle of all ſuperſtition, the conviction of the religioniſts, in all ages, is more affected than real, and ſcarcely ever approaches, in any degree, to that ſolid belief and perſuaſion, which governs us in the common affairs of life. Men dare

* Cicero de divin. lib. ii. c. 24.

† Sueton. Aug. cap. 90, 91, 92. Plin. lib. ii. cap. 7.

not

not avow, even to their own hearts, the doubts, which they entertain on ſuch ſubjects: They make a merit of implicit faith; and diſguiſe to themſelves their real infidelity, by the ſtrongeſt aſſeverations and moſt poſitive bigotry. But nature is too hard for all their endeavours, and ſuffers not the obſcure, glimmering light, afforded in thoſe ſhadowy regions, to equal the ſtrong impreſſions, made by common ſenſe and by experience. The uſual courſe of men's conduct belies their words, and ſhows, that the aſſent in theſe matters is ſome unaccountable operation of the mind between diſbelief and conviction, but approaching much nearer the former than the latter.

Since, therefore, the mind of man appears of ſo looſe and unſteady a contexture, that, even at preſent, when ſo many perſons find an intereſt in continually employing on it the chiſſel and the hammer, yet are they not able to engrave theological tenets with any laſting impreſſion; how much more muſt this have been the caſe in ancient times, when the retainers to the holy function were ſo much fewer in compariſon? No wonder, that the appearances were then very inconſiſtent, and that men, on ſome occaſions, might ſeem determined infidels, and enemies to the eſtabliſhed religion, without being ſo in reality; or at leaſt, without knowing their own minds in that particular.

Another cauſe, which rendered the ancient religions much looſer than the modern, is, that the former were *traditional* and the latter are *ſcriptural*; and the tradition in the former was complex, contradictory, and, on many occaſions, doubtful; ſo that it could not poſſibly be reduced to any ſtandard and canon, or afford any determinate articles of faith. The ſtories of the gods were numberleſs like the popiſh legends; and though every one, almoſt, believed a part of theſe ſtories, yet no one could believe or know the whole: While, at the ſame time, all muſt have acknowledged, that no one part ſtood on a better foundation than the reſt. The traditions of different cities and nations were alſo, on many occaſions, directly oppoſite; and no reaſon could be aſſigned for preferring one to the other. And as there was an infinite number of ſtories, with regard to which tradition was nowiſe poſitive; the gradation was inſenſible, from the moſt fundamental articles of faith, to thoſe looſe and precarious fictions. The pagan religion, therefore, ſeemed to vaniſh like a cloud, whenever one approached to it, and examined it piecemeal. It could never be aſcertained by any fixed dogmas and principles. And though this did not convert the generality of mankind from ſo abſurd a faith; for when will the people be reaſonable? yet it made them faulter and heſitate more in maintaining their principles, and was even apt to produce, in certain diſpoſitions of mind,

ſome

ſome practices and opinions, which had the appearance of determined infidelity.

To which we may add, that the fables of the pagan religion were, of themſelves, light, eaſy, and familiar; without devils, or ſeas of brimſtone, or any objects that could much terrify the imagination. Who could forbear ſmiling, when he thought of the loves of MARS and VENUS, or the amorous frolics of JUPITER and PAN? In this reſpect, it was a true poetical religion; if it had not rather too much levity for the graver kinds of poetry. We find that it has been adopted by modern bards; nor have theſe talked with greater freedom and irreverence of the gods, whom they regarded as fictions, than the ancient did of the real objects of their devotion.

The inference is by no means juſt, that, becauſe a ſyſtem of religion has made no deep impreſſion on the minds of a people, it muſt therefore have been poſitively rejected by all men of common ſenſe, and that oppoſite principles, in ſpite of the prejudices of education, were generally eſtabliſhed by argument and reaſoning. I know not, but a contrary inference may be more probable. The leſs importunate and aſſuming any ſpecies of ſuperſtition appears, the leſs will it provoke men's ſpleen and indignation, or engage them into enquiries concerning its foundation and origin. This in the mean

time is obvious, that the empire of all religious faith over the underſtanding is wavering and uncertain, ſubject to every variety of humour, and dependent on the preſent incidents, which ſtrike the imagination. The difference is only in the degrees. An ancient will place a ſtroke of impiety and one of ſuperſtition alternately, throughout a whole diſcourſe †: A modern often thinks in the ſame way, though he may be more guarded in his expreſſions.

LUCIAN tells us expreſly *, that whoever believed not the moſt ridiculous fables of paganiſm was deemed by the people profane and impious. To what purpoſe, indeed, would that agreeable author have employed the whole force of his wit and ſatyr againſt the national religion, had not that religion

† Witneſs this remarkable paſſage of TACITUS: "Præter "multiplices rerum humanarum caſus, cœlo terraque prodigia, "& fulminum monitus, & futurorum præſagia, læta, triſtia, am-"bigua, manifeſta. Nec enim unquam atrocioribus populi Ro-"mani cladibus, magiſque juſtis judiciis approbatum eſt, non "eſſe curæ Diis ſecuritatem noſtram, eſſe ultionem." Hiſt. lib. i. AUGUSTUS's quarrel with NEPTUNE is an inſtance of the ſame kind. Had not the emperor believed NEPTUNE to be a real being, and to have dominion over the ſea, where had been the foundation of his anger? And if he believed it, what madneſs to provoke ſtill farther that deity? The ſame obſervation may be made upon QUINCTILIAN's exclamation, on account of the death of his children, lib. vi. Præf.

* Philopſeudes.

been

been generally believed by his countrymen and contemporaries?

LIVY ‡ acknowledges as frankly, as any divine would at preſent, the common incredulity of his age; but then he condemns it as ſeverely. And who can imagine, that a national ſuperſtition, which could delude ſo great a man, would not alſo impoſe on the generality of the people?

The STOICS beſtowed many magnificent and even impious epithets on their ſage; that he alone was rich, free, a king, and equal to the immortal gods. They forgot to add, that he was not inferior in prudence and underſtanding to an old woman. For ſurely nothing can be more pitiful than the ſentiments, which that ſect entertained with regard to religious matters; while they ſeriouſly agree with the common augurs, that, when a raven croaks from the left, it is a good omen; but a bad one, when a rook makes a noiſe from the ſame quarter. PANÆTIUS was the only STOIC, among the GREEKS, who ſo much as doubted with regard to auguries and divinations †. MARCUS ANTONINUS * tells us, that he himſelf had received many admonitions from the gods in his ſleep. It is true, EPICTETUS ‖ for-

‡ Lib. x. cap. 40.

† Cicero de Divin. lib. i. cap. 3 & 7.

* Lib. i. § 17. ‖ Ench. § 17.

bids us to regard the language of rooks and ravens; but it is not, that they do not ſpeak truth: It is only, becauſe they can foretel nothing but the breaking of our neck or the forfeiture of our eſtate; which are circumſtances, ſays he, that nowiſe concern us. Thus the STOICS join a philoſophical enthuſiaſm to a religious ſuperſtition. The force of their mind, being all turned to the ſide of morals, unbent itſelf in that of religion †.

PLATO * introduces SOCRATES affirming, that the accuſation of impiety raiſed againſt him was owing entirely to his rejecting ſuch fables, as thoſe of SATURN's caſtrating his father, URANUS, and JUPITER's dethroning SATURN: Yet in a ſubſequent dialogue ‡, SOCRATES confeſſes, that the doctrine of the mortality of the ſoul was the received opinion of the people. Is there here any contradiction? Yes, ſurely: But the contradiction is not in PLATO; it is in the people, whoſe religious principles in general are always compoſed of the moſt diſcordant parts; eſpecially in an age, when ſuperſtition ſate ſo eaſy and light upon them ‖.

† The Stoics, I own, were not quite orthodox in the eſtabliſhed religion; but one may ſee, from theſe inſtances, that they went a great way: And the people undoubtedly went every length.

* Eutyphro. ‡ Phædo.

‖ See NOTE [II].

The

The ſame CICERO, who affected, in his own family, to appear a devout religioniſt, makes no ſcruple, in a public court of judicature, of treating the doctrine of a future ſtate as a ridiculous fable, to which no body could give any attention *. SALLUST † repreſents CÆSAR as ſpeaking the ſame language in the open ſenate ‡.

But that all theſe freedoms implied not a total and univerſal infidelity and ſcepticiſm amongſt the people, is too apparent to be denied. Though ſome parts of the national religion hung looſe upon the minds of men, other parts adhered more cloſely to them: And it was the great buſineſs of the ſceptical philoſophers to ſhow, that there was no more foundation for one than for the other. This is the artifice of COTTA in the dialogues concerning the *nature of the gods*. He refutes the whole ſyſtem of mythology by leading the orthodox, gradually, from the more moment-

* Pro CLUENTIO, cap. 61. † De bello CATILIN.

‡ CICERO (Tuſc. Quæſt.) lib. i. cap. 5, 6. and SENECA (Epiſt. 24.) as alſo JUVENAL (Satyr 2.) maintain that there is no boy or old woman ſo ridiculous as to believe the poets in their accounts of a future ſtate. Why then does LUCRETIUS ſo highly exalt his maſter for freeing us from theſe terrors? Perhaps the generality of mankind were then in the diſpoſition of CEPHALUS in PLATO (de Rep. lib. i.) who while he was young and healthful could ridicule theſe ſtories; but as ſoon as he became old and infirm, began to entertain apprehenſions of their truth. This, we may obſerve, not to be unuſual even at preſent.

ous ſtories, which were believed, to the more frivolous, which every one ridiculed: From the gods to the goddeſſes; from the goddeſſes to the nymphs; from the nymphs to the fawns and ſatyrs. His maſter, CARNEADES, had employed the ſame method of reaſoning *.

Upon the whole, the greateſt and moſt obſervable differences between a *traditional, mythological* religion, and a *ſyſtematical, ſcholaſtical* one, are two: The former is often more reaſonable, as conſiſting only of a multitude of ſtories, which, however groundleſs, imply no expreſs abſurdity and demonſtrative contradiction; and ſits alſo ſo eaſy and light on men's minds, that, though it may be as univerſally received, it happily makes no ſuch deep impreſſion on the affections and underſtanding.

SECT. XIII. *Impious conceptions of the divine nature in moſt popular religions of both kinds.*

The primary religion of mankind ariſes chiefly from an anxious fear of future events; and what ideas will naturally be entertained of inviſible, unknown powers, while men lie under diſmal apprehenſions of any kind, may eaſily be conceived. Every image of vengeance, ſeverity, cruelty, and malice

* SEXT. EMPIR. adverſ. MATHEM. lib. viii.

muſt

muſt occur and muſt augment the ghaſtlineſs and horror, which oppreſſes the amazed religioniſt. A panic having once ſeized the mind, the active fancy ſtill farther multiplies the objects of terror; while that profound darkneſs, or, what is worſe, that glimmering light, with which we are invironed, repreſents the ſpectres of divinity under the moſt dreadful appearances imaginable. And no idea of perverſe wickedneſs can be framed, which thoſe terrified devotees do not readily, without ſcruple, apply to their deity.

This appears the natural ſtate of religion, when ſurveyed in one light. But if we conſider, on the other hand, that ſpirit of praiſe and eulogy, which neceſſarily has place in all religions, and which is the conſequence of theſe very terrors, we muſt expect a quite contrary ſyſtem of theology to prevail. Every virtue, every excellence, muſt be aſcribed to the divinity, and no exaggeration will be deemed ſufficient to reach thoſe perfections, with which he is endowed. Whatever ſtrains of panegyric can be invented, are immediately embraced, without conſulting any arguments or phænomena: It is eſteemed a ſufficient confirmation of them, that they give us more magnificent ideas of the divine object of our worſhip and adoration.

Here therefore is a kind of contradiction between the different principles of human nature, which enter

enter into religion. Our natural terrors preſent the notion of a deviliſh and malicious deity: Our propenſity to praiſe leads us to acknowledge an excellent and divine. And the influence of theſe oppoſite principles are various, according to the different ſituation of the human underſtanding.

In very barbarous and ignorant nations, ſuch as the AFRICANS and INDIANS, nay even the JAPONESE, who can form no extenſive ideas of power and knowledge, worſhip may be paid to a being, whom they confeſs to be wicked and deteſtable; though they may be cautious, perhaps, of pronouncing this judgment of him in public, or in his temple, where he may be ſuppoſed to hear their reproaches.

Such rude, imperfect ideas of the Divinity adhere long to all idolaters; and it may ſafely be affirmed, that the GREEKS themſelves never got entirely rid of them. It is remarked by XENOPHON *, in praiſe of SOCRATES, that this philoſopher aſſented not to the vulgar opinion, which ſuppoſed the gods to know ſome things, and be ignorant of others: He maintained, that they knew every thing; what was done, ſaid, or even thought. But as this was a ſtrain of philoſophy † much above the conception of his

* Mem. lib. i.

† It was conſidered among the ancients, as a very extraordinary, philoſophical paradox, that the preſence of the gods was not confined to the heavens, but was extended every where; as we learn from LUCIAN. *Hermotimus ſive De ſectis.*

country-

countrymen, we need not be ſurprized, if very frankly, in their books and converſation, they blamed the deities, whom they worſhipped in their temples. It is obſervable, that HERODOTUS in particular ſcruples not, in many paſſages, to aſcribe *envy* to the gods; a ſentiment, of all others, the moſt ſuitable to a mean and deviliſh nature. The pagan hymns, however, ſung in public worſhip, contained nothing but epithets of praiſe; even while the actions aſcribed to the gods were the moſt barbarous and deteſtable. When TIMOTHEUS, the poet, recited a hymn to DIANA, where he enumerated, with the greateſt eulogies, all the actions and attributes of that cruel, capricious goddeſs: *May your daughter*, ſaid one preſent, *become ſuch as the deity whom you celebrate* *.

But as men farther exalt their idea of their divinity; it is often their notion of his power and knowledge only, not of his goodneſs, which is improved. On the contrary, in proportion to the ſuppoſed extent of his ſcience and authority, their terrors naturally augment; while they believe, that no ſecrecy can conceal them from his ſcrutiny, and that even the inmoſt receſſes of their breaſt lie open before him. They muſt then be careful not to form expreſsly any ſentiment of blame and diſapprobation. All muſt be

* PLUTARCH. de Superſtit.

applauſe,

applauſe, raviſhment, extacy. And while their gloomy apprehenſions make them aſcribe to him meaſures of conduct, which, in human creatures, would be highly blamed, they muſt ſtill affect to praiſe and admire that conduct in the object of their devotional addreſſes. Thus it may ſafely be affirmed, that popular religions are really, in the conception of their more vulgar votaries, a ſpecies of dæmoniſm; and the higher the deity is exalted in power and knowledge, the lower of courſe is he depreſſed in goodneſs and benevolence; whatever epithets of praiſe may be beſtowed on him by his amazed adorers. Among idolaters, the words may be falſe, and belie the ſecret opinion: But among more exalted religioniſts, the opinion itſelf often contracts a kind of falſehood, and belies the inward ſentiment. The heart ſecretly deteſts ſuch meaſures of cruel and implacable vengeance; but the judgment dares not but pronounce them perfect and adorable. And the additional miſery of this inward ſtruggle aggravates all the other terrors, by which theſe unhappy victims to ſuperſtition are for ever haunted.

LUCIAN † obſerves, that a young man, who reads the hiſtory of the gods in HOMER or HESIOD, and finds their factions, wars, injuſtice, inceſt, adultery,

† Necyomantia.

and

and other immoralities ſo highly celebrated, is much ſurprized afterwards, when he comes into the world, to obſerve, that puniſhments are by law inflicted on the ſame actions, which he had been taught to aſcribe to ſuperior beings. The contradiction is ſtill perhaps ſtronger between the repreſentations given us by ſome latter religions and our natural ideas of generoſity, lenity, impartiality, and juſtice; and in proportion to the multiplied terrors of theſe religions, the barbarous conceptions of the divinity are multiplied upon us *. Nothing can preſerve untainted the genuine principles of morals in our judgment of human conduct, but the abſolute neceſſity of theſe principles to the exiſtence of ſociety. If common conception can indulge princes in a ſyſtem of ethics, ſomewhat different from that which ſhould regulate private perſons; how much more thoſe ſuperior beings, whoſe attributes, views, and nature are ſo totally unknown to us? *Sunt ſuperis ſua jura* †. The gods have maxims of juſtice peculiar to themſelves.

SECT. XIV. *Bad influence of moſt popular religions on morality.*

Here I cannot forbear obſerving a fact, which may be worth the attention of ſuch as make human

* See NOTE [KK].

† OVID. Metam. lib. ix. 501.

nature

nature the object of their enquiry. It is certain, that, in every religion, however ſublime the verbal definition which it gives of its divinity, many of the votaries, perhaps the greateſt number, will ſtill ſeek the divine favour, not by virtue and good morals, which alone can be acceptable to a perfect being, but either by frivolous obſervances, by intemperate zeal, by rapturous extaſies, or by the belief of myſterious and abſurd opinions. The leaſt part of the *Sadder*, as well as of the *Pentateuch*, conſiſts in precepts of morality; and we may be aſſured alſo, that that part was always the leaſt obſerved and regarded. When the old ROMANS were attacked with a peſtilence, they never aſcribed their ſufferings to their vices, or dreamed of repentance and amendment. They never thought, that they were the general robbers of the world, whoſe ambition and avarice made deſolate the earth, and reduced opulent nations to want and beggary. They only created a dictator *, in order to drive a nail into a door; and by that means, they thought that they had ſufficiently appeaſed their incenſed deity.

In ÆGINA, one faction forming a conſpiracy, barbarouſly and treacherouſly aſſaſſinated ſeven hundred of their fellow citizens; and carried their fury

* Called Dictator clavis figendæ cauſa. T. LIVII, l. vii. c. 3.

ſo far, that, one miſerable fugitive having fled to the temple, they cut off his hands, by which he clung to the gates, and carrying him out of holy ground, immediately murdered him. *By this impiety*, ſays HERODOTUS †, (not by the other many cruel aſſaſſinations) *they offended the gods, and contracted an inexpiable guilt.*

Nay, if we ſhould ſuppoſe, what ſeldom happens, that a popular religion were found, in which it was expreſly declared, that nothing but morality could gain the divine favour; if an order of prieſts were inſtituted to inculcate this opinion, in daily ſermons, and with all the arts of perſuaſion; yet ſo inveterate are the people's prejudices, that, for want of ſome other ſuperſtition, they would make the very attendance on theſe ſermons the eſſentials of religion, rather than place them in virtue and good morals. The ſublime prologue of ZALEUCUS's laws ‡ inſpired not the LOCRIANS, ſo far as we can learn, with any ſounder notions of the meaſures of acceptance with the deity, than were familiar to the other GREEKS.

This obſervation, then, holds univerſally: But ſtill one may be at ſome loſs to account for it. It is not ſufficient to obſerve, that the people, every

† Lib. vi. ‡ To be found in DIOD. SIC. lib. xii. where,

where, degrade their deities into a ſimilitude with themſelves, and conſider them merely as a ſpecies of human creatures, ſomewhat more potent and intelligent. This will not remove the difficulty. For there is no *man* ſo ſtupid, as that, judging by his natural reaſon, he would not eſteem virtue and honeſty the moſt valuable qualities, which any perſon could poſſeſs. Why not aſcribe the ſame ſentiment to his deity? Why not make all religion, or the chief part of it, to conſiſt in theſe attainments?

Nor is it ſatisfactory to ſay, that the practice of morality is more difficult than that of ſuperſtition; and is therefore rejected. For, not to mention the exceſſive pennances of the *Brachmans* and *Talapoins*; it is certain, that the *Rhamadan* of the TURKS, during which the poor wretches, for many days, often in the hotteſt months of the year, and in ſome of the hotteſt climates of the world, remain without eating or drinking from the riſing to the ſetting ſun; this *Rhamadan*, I ſay, muſt be more ſevere than the practice of any moral duty, even to the moſt vicious and depraved of mankind. The four lents of the MUSCOVITES, and the auſterities of ſome *Roman Catholics*, appear more diſagreeable than meekneſs and benevolence. In ſhort, all virtue, when men are reconciled to it by ever ſo little practice, is agreeable: All ſuperſtition is for ever odious and burthenſome.

Perhaps

Perhaps, the following account may be received as a true ſolution of the difficulty. The duties, which a man performs as a friend or parent, ſeem merely owing to his benefactor or children; nor can he be wanting to theſe duties, without breaking through all the ties of nature and morality. A ſtrong inclination may prompt him to the performance: A ſentiment of order and moral beauty joins its force to theſe natural ties: And the whole man, if truly virtuous, is drawn to his duty, without any effort or endeavour. Even with regard to the virtues, which are more auſtere, and more founded on reflection, ſuch as public ſpirit, filial duty, temperance, or integrity; the moral obligation, in our apprehenſion, removes all pretence to religious merit; and the virtuous conduct is deemed no more than what we owe to ſociety and to ourſelves. In all this, a ſuperſtitious man finds nothing, which he has properly performed for the ſake of his deity, or which can peculiarly recommend him to the divine favour and protection. He conſiders not, that the moſt genuine method of ſerving the divinity is by promoting the happineſs of his creatures. He ſtill looks out for ſome more immediate ſervice of the ſupreme Being, in order to allay thoſe terrors, with which he is haunted. And any practice, recommended to him, which either ſerves to no purpoſe in life, or offers the ſtrongeſt violence to his natural inclinations; that practice he will the more readily

embrace, on account of thoſe very circumſtances, which ſhould make him abſolutely reject it. It ſeems the more purely religious, becauſe it proceeds from no mixture of any other motive or conſideration. And if, for its ſake, he ſacrifices much of his eaſe and quiet, his claim of merit appears ſtill to riſe upon him, in proportion to the zeal and devotion which he diſcovers. In reſtoring a loan, or paing a debt, his divinity is nowiſe beholden to him; becauſe theſe acts of juſtice are what he was bound to perform, and what many would have performed, were there no god in the univerſe. But if he faſt a day, or give himſelf a ſound whipping; this has a direct reference, in his opinion, to the ſervice of God. No other motive could engage him to ſuch auſterities. By theſe diſtinguiſhed marks of devotion, he has now acquired the divine favour; and may expect, in recompence, protection and ſafety in this world, and eternal happineſs in the next.

Hence, the greateſt crimes have been found, in many inſtances, compatible with a ſuperſtitious piety and devotion: Hence, it is juſtly regarded as unſafe to draw any certain inference in favour of a man's morals from the fervour or ſtrictneſs of his religious exerciſes, even though he himſelf believe them ſincere. Nay, it has been obſerved, that enormities of the blackeſt dye have been rather apt

to

to produce ſuperſtitious terrors, and encreaſe the religious paſſion. BOMILCAR, having formed a conſpiracy for aſſaſſinating at once the whole ſenate of CARTHAGE, and invading the liberties of his country, loſt the opportunity, from a continual regard to omens and prophecies! *Thoſe who undertake the moſt criminal and moſt dangerous enterprizes are commonly the moſt ſuperſtitious*; as an ancient hiſtorian * remarks on this occaſion. Their devotion and ſpiritual faith riſe with their fears. CATILINE was not contented with the eſtabliſhed deities, and received rites of the national religion: His anxious terrors made him ſeek new inventions of this kind †; which he never probably had dreamed of, had he remained a good citizen, and obedient to the laws of his country.

To which we may add, that, even after the commiſſion of crimes, there ariſe remorſes and ſecret horrors, which give no reſt to the mind, but make it have recourſe to religious rites and ceremonies, as expiations of its offences. Whatever weakens or diſorders the internal frame promotes the intereſts of ſuperſtition: And nothing is more deſtructive to them than a manly, ſteady virtue, which either preſerves us from diſaſtrous, melancholy accidents, or

* DIOD. SIC. lib. xv.

† CIC. CATIL. i. SALUST. de bello CATIL.

teaches us to bear them. During ſuch calm ſunſhine of the mind, theſe ſpectres of falſe divinity never make their appearance. On the other hand, while we abandon ourſelves to the natural undiſciplined ſuggeſtions of our timid and anxious hearts, every kind of barbarity is aſcribed to the ſupreme Being, from the terrors with which we are agitated; and every kind of caprice, from the methods which we embrace in order to appeaſe him. *Barbarity, caprice*; theſe qualities, however nominally diſguiſed, we may univerſally obſerve, form the ruling character of the deity in popular religions. Even prieſts, inſtead of correcting theſe depraved ideas of mankind, have often been found ready to foſter and encourage them. The more tremendous the divinity is repreſented, the more tame and ſubmiſſive do men become to his miniſters: And the more unaccountable the meaſures of acceptance required by him, the more neceſſary does it become to abandon our natural reaſon, and yield to their ghoſtly guidance and direction. Thus it may be allowed, that the artificers of men aggravate our natural infirmities and follies of this kind, but never originally beget them. Their root ſtrikes deeper into the mind, and ſprings from the eſſential and univerſal properties of human nature.

SECT.

SECT. XV. *General Corollary.*

Though the ſtupidity of men, barbarous and uninſtructed, be ſo great, that they may not ſee a ſovereign author in the more obvious works of nature, to which they are ſo much familiarized; yet it ſcarcely ſeems poſſible, that any one of good underſtanding ſhould reject that idea, when once it is ſuggeſted to him. A purpoſe, an intention, a deſign is evident in every thing; and when our comprehenſion is ſo far enlarged as to contemplate the firſt riſe of this viſible ſyſtem, we muſt adopt, with the ſtrongeſt conviction, the idea of ſome intelligent cauſe or author. The uniform maxims too, which prevail throughout the whole frame of the univerſe, naturally, if not neceſſarily, lead us to conceive this intelligence as ſingle and undivided, where the prejudices of education oppoſe not ſo reaſonable a theory. Even the contrarieties of nature, by diſcovering themſelves every where, become proofs of ſome conſiſtent plan, and eſtabliſh one ſingle purpoſe or intention, however inexplicable and incomprehenſible.

Good and ill are univerſally intermingled and confounded; happineſs and miſery, wiſdom and folly, virtue and vice. Nothing is pure and entirely of a piece. All advantages are attended with diſadvantages. An univerſal compenſation prevails in

all conditions of being and exiſtence. And it is not poſſible for us, by our moſt chimerical wiſhes, to form the idea of a ſtation or ſituation alogether deſirable. The draughts of life, according to the poet's fiction, are always mixed from the veſſels on each hand of JUPITER: Or if any cup be preſented altogether pure, it is drawn only, as the ſame poet tells us, from the left-handed veſſel.

The more exquiſite any good is, of which a ſmall ſpecimen is afforded us, the ſharper is the evil, allied to it; and few exceptions are found to this uniform law of nature. The moſt ſprightly wit borders on madneſs; the higheſt effuſions of joy produce the deepeſt melancholy; the moſt raviſhing pleaſures are attended with the moſt cruel laſſitude and diſguſt; the moſt flattering hopes make way for the ſevereſt diſappointments. And in general, no courſe of life has ſuch ſafety (for happineſs is not to be dreamed of) as the temperate and moderate, which maintains, as far as poſſible, a mediocrity, and a kind of inſenſibility, in every thing.

As the good, the great, the ſublime, the raviſhing are found eminently in the genuine principles of theiſm; it may be expected, from the analogy of nature, that the baſe, the abſurd, the mean, the terrifying will be diſcovered equally in religious fictions and chimeras.

The univerſal propenſity to believe in invifible, intelligent power, if not an original inſtinct, being at leaſt a general attendant of human nature, may be conſidered as a kind of mark or ſtamp, which the divine workman has ſet upon his work; and nothing ſurely can more dignify mankind, than to be thus ſelected from all the other parts of the creation, and to bear the image or impreſſion of the univerſal Creator. But conſult this image, as it appears in the popular religions of the world. How is the deity disfigured in our repreſentations of him! What caprice, abſurdity, and immorality are attributed to him! How much is he degraded even below the character, which we ſhould naturally, in common life, aſcribe to a man of ſenſe and virtue!

What a noble privilege is it of human reaſon to attain the knowledge of the ſupreme Being; and, from the viſible works of nature, be enabled to infer ſo ſublime a principle as its ſupreme Creator? But turn the reverſe of the medal. Survey moſt nations and moſt ages. Examine the religious principles, which have, in fact, prevailed in the world. You will ſcarcely be perſuaded, that they are other than ſick men's dreams: Or perhaps will regard them more as the playſome whimſies of monkies in human ſhape, than the ſerious, poſitive, dogmatical aſſeverations of a being, who dignifies himſelf with the name of rational.

Hear the verbal proteſtations of all men: Nothing they are ſo certain of as their religious tenets. Examine their lives: You will ſcarcely think that they repoſe the ſmalleſt confidence in them.

The greateſt and trueſt zeal gives us no ſecurity againſt hypocriſy: The moſt open impiety is attended with a ſecret dread and compunction.

No theological abſurdities ſo glaring as have not, ſometimes, been embraced by men of the greateſt and moſt cultivated underſtanding. No religious precepts ſo rigorous as have not been adopted by the moſt voluptuous and moſt abandoned of men.

Ignorance is the mother of Devotion: A maxim that is proverbial, and confirmed by general experience. Look out for a people, entirely void of religion: If you find them at all, be aſſured, that they are but few degrees removed from brutes.

What ſo pure as ſome of the morals, included in ſome theological ſyſtems? What ſo corrupt as ſome of the practices, to which theſe ſyſtems give riſe?

The comfortable views, exhibited by the belief of futurity are raviſhing and delightful. But how quickly vaniſh on the appearance of its terrors, which keep a more firm and durable poſſeſſion of the human mind?

The

The whole is a riddle, an ænigma, an inexplicable myſtery. Doubt, uncertainty, ſuſpence of judgment appear the only reſult of our moſt accurate ſcrutiny, concerning this ſubject. But ſuch is the frailty of human reaſon, and ſuch the irreſiſtible contagion of opinion, that even this deliberate doubt could ſcarcely be upheld; did we not enlarge our view, and oppoſing one ſpecies of ſuperſtition to another, ſet them a quarrelling; while we ourſelves, during their fury and contention, happily make our eſcape, into the calm, though obſcure, regions of philoſophy.

NOTES

TO THE

FOURTH VOLUME.

NOTE [A], p. 16.

BEnevolence naturally divides into two kinds, the *general* and *particular*. The firſt is, where we have no friendſhip or connexion or eſteem for the perſon, but feel only a general ſympathy with him or a compaſſion for his pains, and a congratulation with his pleaſures. The other ſpecies of benevolence is founded on an opinion of virtue, on ſervices done us, or on ſome particular connexions. Both theſe ſentiments muſt be allowed real in human nature; but whether they will reſolve into ſome nice conſiderations of ſelf-love, is a queſtion more curious than important. The former ſentiment, *viz.* that of general benevolence, or humanity, or ſympathy, we ſhall have occaſion frequently to treat of in the courſe of this inquiry; and I aſſume it as real, from general experience, without any other proof.

NOTE [B], p. 41.

THIS fiction of a ſtate of nature, as a ſtate of war, was not firſt ſtarted by Mr. HOBBES, as is commonly imagined. PLATO endeavours to refute an hypotheſis very like it in the 2d, 3d, and 4th books de republica. CICERO, on the contrary, ſuppoſes it certain and univerſally acknowledged in the following paſſage. "Quis enim veſtrûm, judices, ignorat, ita naturam "rerum tuliſſe, ut quodam tempore homines, nondum neque na-"turali, neque civili jure deſcripto, fuſi per agros, ac diſperſi va-"garentur

" garentur tantumque haberent quantum manu ac viribus, per " cædem ac vulnera, aut eripere, aut retinere potuiſſent? Qui " igitur primi virtute & conſilio præſtanti extiterunt, ii perſpecto " genere humanæ docilitatis atque ingenii, diſſipatos, unum in " locum congregarunt, eoſque ex feritate illa ad juſtitiam ac man- " ſuetudinem tranſduxerunt. Tum res ad communem utilita- " tem, quas publicas appellamus, tum conventicula hominum, " quæ poſtea civitates nominatæ ſunt, tum domicilia conjuncta, " quas urbes dicamus, invento & divino & humano jure, mæni- " bus ſepſerunt. Atque inter hanc vitam, perpolitam humani- " tate, & illam immanem, nihil tam intereſt quam JUS atque " VIS. Horum utro uti nolimus, altero eſt utendum. Vim " volumus extingui? Jus valeat neceſſe eſt, id eſt, judicia, qui- " bus omne jus continetur. Judicia diſplicent, aut nulla, ſunt? " Vis dominetur neceſſe eſt? Hæc vident omnes." *Pro Sext.* I. 42.

NOTE [C], p. 51.

THE author of *L'Eſprit des Loix*. This illuſtrious writer, however, ſets out with a different theory, and ſuppoſes all right to be founded on certain *rapports* or relations; which is a ſyſtem, that, in my opinion, never will be reconciled with true philoſophy. Father MALEBRANCHE, as far as I can learn, was the firſt that ſtarted this abſtract theory of morals, which was afterwards adopted by CUDWORTH, CLARKE, and others; and as it excludes all ſentiment, and pretends to found every thing on reaſon, it has not wanted followers in this philoſophic age. See Section I. and Appendix I. With regard to juſtice, the virtue here treated of, the inference againſt this theory ſeems ſhort and concluſive. Property is allowed to be dependant on civil laws; civil laws are allowed to have no other object, but the intereſt of ſociety: This therefore muſt be allowed to be the ſole foundation of property and juſtice. Not to mention, that our obligation itſelf to obey the magiſtrate and his laws is founded on nothing but the intereſts of ſociety.

If the ideas of juſtice, ſometimes, do not follow the diſpoſitions of civil law; we ſhall find, that theſe caſes, inſtead of objections, are confirmations of the theory delivered above. Where a civil

a civil law is ſo perverſe as to croſs all the intereſts of ſociety, it loſes all its authority, and men judge by the ideas of natural juſtice, which are conformable to thoſe intereſts. Sometimes alſo civil laws, for uſeful purpoſes, require a ceremony or form; and where that is wanting, their decrees run contrary to the uſual tenor of juſtice; but one who takes advantage of ſuch chicanes, is not commonly regarded as an honeſt man. Thus, the intereſts of ſociety require, that contracts be fulfilled; and there is not a more material article either of natural or civil juſtice: But the omiſſion of a trifling circumſtance will often, by law, invalidate a contract, *in foro humano*, but not *in foro conſcientiæ*, as divines expreſs themſelves. In theſe caſes, the magiſtrate is ſuppoſed only to withdraw his power of inforcing the right, not to have altered the right. Where his intention extends to the right, and is conformable to the intereſts of ſociety; it never fails to alter the right; a clear proof of the origin of juſtice and of property, as aſſigned above.

NOTE [D], p. 54.

IT is evident, that the will or conſent alone never transfers property, nor cauſes the obligation of a promiſe (for the ſame reaſoning extends to both) but the will muſt be expreſſed by words or ſigns, in order to impoſe a tye upon any man. The expreſſion being once brought in as ſubſervient to the will, ſoon becomes the principal part of the promiſe; nor will a man be leſs bound by his word, though he ſecretly give a different direction to his intention, and with-hold the aſſent of his mind. But though the expreſſion makes, on moſt occaſions, the whole of the promiſe, yet it does not always ſo; and one who ſhould make uſe of any expreſſion, of which he knows not the meaning, and which he uſes without any ſenſe of the conſequences, would not certainly be bound by it. Nay, though he know its meaning, yet if he uſes it in jeſt only, and with ſuch ſigns as ſhow evidently, that he has no ſerious intention of binding himſelf, he would not lie under any obligation of performance; but it is neceſſary, that the words be a perfect expreſſion of the will, without any contrary ſigns. Nay, even this we muſt not carry ſo far as to imagine,

imagine, that one, whom by our quickneſs of underſtanding, we conjecture, from certain ſigns, to have an intention of deceiving us, is not bound by his expreſſion or verbal promiſe, if we accept of it; but muſt limit this concluſion to thoſe caſes where the ſigns are of a different nature from thoſe of deceit. All thoſe contradictions are eaſily accounted for, if juſtice ariſes entirely from its uſefulneſs to ſociety; but will never be explained on any other hypotheſis.

It is remarkable, that the moral deciſions of the *Jeſuits* and other relaxed caſuiſts, were commonly formed in proſecution of ſome ſuch ſubtilties of reaſoning as are here pointed out, and proceeded as much from the habit of ſcholaſtic refinement as from any corruption of the heart, if we may follow the authority of Monſ. BAYLE. See his dictionary, article LOYOLA. And why has the indignation of mankind riſen ſo high againſt theſe caſuiſts; but becauſe every one perceived, that human ſociety could not ſubſiſt were ſuch practices authorized, and that morals muſt always be handled with a view to public intereſt, more than philoſophical regularity? If the ſecret direction of the intention, ſaid every man of ſenſe, could invalidate a contract; where is our ſecurity? And yet a metaphyſical ſchoolman might think, that, where an intention was ſuppoſed to be requiſite, if that intention really had not place, no conſequence ought to follow, and no obligation be impoſed. The caſuiſtical ſubtilties may not be greater than the ſubtilties of lawyers, hinted at above; but as the former are *pernicious*, and the latter *innocent* and even *neceſſary*, this is the reaſon of the very different reception they meet with from the world.

It is a doctrine of the church of ROME, that the prieſt, by a ſecret direction of his intention, can invalidate any ſacrament. This poſition is derived from a ſtrict and regular proſecution of the obvious truth, that empty words alone, without any meaning or intention in the ſpeaker, can never be attended with any effect. If the ſame concluſion be not admitted in reaſonings concerning civil contracts, where the affair is allowed to be of ſo much leſs conſequence than the eternal ſalvation of thouſands,

it

it proceeds entirely from men's ſenſe of the danger and inconvenience of the doctrine in the former caſe: And we may obſerve, that however poſitive, arrogant, and dogmatical any ſuperſtition may appear, it never can convey any thorough perſuaſion of the reality of its objects, or put them, in any degree, on a balance with the common incidents of life, which we learn from daily obſervation and experimental reaſoning.

NOTE [E], p. 63.

THE only ſolution, which PLATO gives to all the objections, that might be raiſed againſt the community of women, eſtabliſhed in his imaginary commonwealth, is, Καλλιςα γαρ δη τȣτο καὶ λεγεται καὶ λελεξεται, οτι το μεν ωφελιμον καλον. Το δε βλαβερον αισχρον. *Scite enim iſtud & dicitur & dicetur, Id quod utile ſit honeſtum eſſe, quod autem inutile ſit turpe eſſe.* De Rep. lib. v. p. 457. ex edit. Serr. And this maxim will admit of no doubt, where public utility is concerned; which is PLATO's meaning. And indeed to what other purpoſe do all the ideas of chaſtity and modeſty ſerve? *Niſi utile eſt quod facimus, fruſtra eſt gloria*, ſays PHÆDRUS. Καλον των βλαβερων ȣδεν, ſays PLUTARCH *de vitioſo pudore.* Nihil eorum quæ damnoſa ſunt, pulchrum eſt. The ſame was the opinion of the Stoics. φασιν ȣν οι Στωικοι αγαθον ειναι ωφελειαν η ȣκ ετεραν ωφελειας, ωφελειν μεν λεγοντες την αρετην καὶ την σπȣδαιαν πραξιν. SEPT. EMP. lib. iii. cap. 20.

NOTE [F], p. 68.

THAT the lighter machine yields to the heavier, and, in machines of the ſame kind, that the empty yield to the loaded: this rule is founded on convenience. That thoſe who are going to the capital take place of thoſe who are coming from it; this ſeems to be founded on ſome idea of the dignity of the great city, and of the preference of the future to the paſt. From like reaſons, among foot-walkers, the right-hand intitles a man to the wall, and prevents joſtling, which peaceable people find very diſagreeable and inconvenient.

NOTE

NOTE [G], p. 70.

WE ought not to imagine, becauſe an inanimate object may be uſeful as well as a man, that therefore it ought alſo, according to this ſyſtem, to merit the appellation of *virtuous*. The ſentiments, excited by utility, are, in the two caſes, very different; and the one is mixed with affection, eſteem, approbation, *&c.* and not the other. In like manner, an inanimate object may have good colour and proportions as well as a human figure. But can we ever be in love with the former? There are a numerous ſet of paſſions and ſentiments, of which thinking rational beings are, by the original conſtitution of nature, the only proper objects: And though the very ſame qualities be transferred to an inſenſible, inanimate being, they will not excite the ſame ſentiments. The beneficial qualities of herbs and minerals are, indeed, ſometimes called their *virtues*; but this is an effect of the caprice of language, which ought not to be regarded in reaſoning. For though there be a ſpecies of approbation attending even inanimate objects, when beneficial, yet this ſentiment is ſo weak, and ſo different from what is directed to beneficent magiſtrates or ſtateſmen, that they ought not to be ranked under the ſame claſs or appellation.

A very ſmall variation of the object, even where the ſame qualities are preſerved, will deſtroy a ſentiment. Thus, the ſame beauty, transferred to a different ſex, excites no amorous paſſion, where nature is not extremely perverted.

NOTE [H], p. 73.

UNdutifulneſs to parents is diſapproved of by mankind, προορωμενους το μελλον, ϗ συλλογιζομενους οτι το παραπλησιον εκαστοις αυτων συγκυρησει. Ingratitude for a like reaſon (though he ſeems there to mix a more generous regard) συναγαγακτεινας μεν τω πελας, αναφερουσας δ' επ' αυτους το παραπλησιον εξ ων υπογιγνεσθαι τις εννοια παρεσκαζω τυ καθηκοντος δυναμεως ϗ θεωριας. Lib. vi. cap. 4. Perhaps the hiſtorian only meant, that our ſympathy

ſympathy and humanity was more enlivened, by our conſidering the ſimilarity of our caſe with that of the perſon ſuffering; which is a juſt ſentiment.

NOTE [I], p. 79.

IT is needleſs to puſh our reſearches ſo far as to aſk, why we have humanity or a fellow-feeling with others. It is ſufficient, that this is experienced to be a principle in human nature. We muſt ſtop ſomewhere in our examination of cauſes; and there are, in every ſcience, ſome general principles, beyond which we cannot hope to find any principle more general. No man is abſolutely indifferent to the happineſs and miſery of others. The firſt has a natural tendency to give pleaſure; the ſecond, pain. This every one may find in himſelf. It is not probable, that theſe principles can be reſolved into principles more ſimple and univerſal, whatever attempts may have been made to that purpoſe. But if it were poſſible, it belongs not to the preſent ſubject; and we may here ſafely conſider theſe principles as original: Happy, if we can render all the conſequences ſufficiently plain and perſpicuous.

NOTE [K], p. 86.

IN proportion to the ſtation which a man poſſeſſes, according to the relations in which he is placed; we always expect from him a greater or leſs degree of good, and when diſappointed, blame his inutility; and much more do we blame him, if any ill or prejudice ariſes from his conduct and behaviour. When the intereſts of one country interfere with thoſe of another, we eſtimate the merits of a ſtateſman by the good or ill, which reſults to his own country from his meaſures and councils, without regard to the prejudice which he brings on its enemies and rivals. His fellow-citizens are the objects, which lie neareſt the eye, while we determine his character. And as nature has implanted in every one a ſuperior affection to his own country, we never expect any regard to diſtant nations, where a competition ariſes. Not to mention, that, while every man conſults the good of his

own community, we are ſenſible, that the general intereſt of mankind is better promoted, than by any looſe indeterminate views to the good of a ſpecies, whence no beneficial action could ever reſult, for want of a duly limited object, on which they could exert themſelves.

NOTE [L], p. 90.

FOR a like reaſon, the tendencies of actions and characters, not their real accidental conſequences, are alone regarded in our moral determinations or general judgments; though in our real feeling or ſentiment, we cannot help paying greater regard to one whoſe ſtation, joined to virtue, renders him really uſeful to ſociety, than to one, who exerts the ſocial virtues only in good intentions and benevolent affections. Separating the character from the fortune, by an eaſy and neceſſary effort of thought, we pronounce theſe perſons alike, and give them the ſame general praiſe. The judgment corrects or endeavours to correct the appearance: But is not able entirely to prevail over ſentiment.

Why is this peach-tree ſaid to be better than that other; but becauſe it produces more or better fruit? And would not the ſame praiſe be given it, though ſnails or vermin had deſtroyed the fruit, before it came to full maturity? In morals too, is not *the tree known by the fruit?* And cannot we eaſily diſtinguiſh between nature and accident, in the one caſe as well as in the other?

NOTE [M], p. 92.

IT is wiſely ordained by nature, that private connexions ſhould commonly prevail over univerſal views and conſiderations; otherwiſe our affections and actions would be diſſipated and loſt, for want of a proper limited object. Thus a ſmall benefit done to ourſelves, or our near friends, excites more lively ſentiments of love and approbation than a great benefit done to a diſtant commonwealth: But ſtill we know here, as in all the ſenſes, to correct theſe inequalities by reflection, and retain a general ſtandard of vice and virtue, founded chiefly on general uſefulneſs.

NOTE

NOTE [N], p. 98.

ONE may venture to affirm, that there is no human creature, to whom the appearance of happineſs (where envy or revenge has no place) does not give pleaſure, that of miſery, uneaſineſs. This ſeems inſeparable from our make and conſtitution. But they are only the more generous minds, that are thence prompted to ſeek zealouſly the good of others, and to have a real paſſion for their welfare. With men of narrow and ungenerous ſpirits, this ſympathy goes not beyond a ſlight feeling of the imagination, which ſerves only to excite ſentiments of complacency or cenſure, and makes them apply to the object either honourable or diſhonourable appellations. A griping miſer, for inſtance, praiſes extremely *induſtry* and *frugality* even in others, and ſets them, in his eſtimation, above all the other virtues. He knows the good that reſults from them, and feels that ſpecies of happineſs with a more lively ſympathy, than any other you could repreſent to him; though perhaps he would not part with a ſhilling to make the fortune of the induſtrious man, whom he praiſes ſo highly.

NOTE [O], p. 112.

DIODORUS SICULUS, lib. xv. It may not be improper to give the character of EPAMINONDAS, as drawn by the hiſtorian, in order to ſhow the ideas of perfect merit, which prevailed in thoſe ages. In other illuſtrious men, ſays he, you will obſerve, that each poſſeſſed ſome one ſhining quality, which was the foundation of his fame: In EPAMINONDAS all the *virtues* are found united; force of body, eloquence of expreſſion, vigour of mind, contempt of riches, gentleneſs of diſpoſition, and *what is chiefly to be regarded*, courage and conduct in war.

NOTE [P], p. 113.

ALL men are equally liable to pain and diſeaſe and ſickneſs; and may again recover health and eaſe. Theſe circumſtances, as they make no diſtinction between one man and another, are no ſource of pride or humility, regard or contempt. But comparing our own ſpecies to ſuperior ones, it is a very mor-

tifying conſideration, that we ſhould all be ſo liable to diſeaſes and infirmities; and divines accordingly employ this topic, in order to depreſs ſelf-conceit and vanity. They would have more ſucceſs, if the common bent of our thoughts were not perpetually turned to compare ourſelves with each other. The infirmities of old age are mortifying; becauſe a compariſon with the young may take place. The king's evil is induſtriouſly concealed, becauſe it affects others, and is tranſmitted to poſterity. The caſe is nearly the ſame with ſuch diſeaſes as convey any nauſeous or frightful images; the epilepſy, for inſtance, ulcers, ſores, ſcabs, *&c.*

NOTE [Q], p. 116.

THERE is ſomething extraordinary, and ſeemingly unaccountable in the operation of our paſſions, when we conſider the fortune and ſituation of others. Very often another's advancement and proſperity produces envy, which has a ſtrong mixture of hatred, and ariſes chiefly from the compariſon of ourſelves with the perſon. At the very ſame time, or at leaſt, in very ſhort intervals, we may feel the paſſion of reſpect, which is a ſpecies of affection or good-will, with a mixture of humility. On the other hand, the misfortunes of our fellows often cauſe pity, which has in it a ſtrong mixture of good-will. This ſentiment of pity is nearly allied to contempt, which is a ſpecies of diſlike, with a mixture of pride. I only point out theſe phænomena, as a ſubject of ſpeculation to ſuch as are curious with regard to moral enquiries. It is ſufficient for the preſent purpoſe to obſerve in general, that power and riches commonly cauſe reſpect, poverty and meanneſs contempt, though particular views and incidents may ſometimes raiſe the paſſions of envy and of pity.

NOTE [R], p. 120.

THERE is no man, who, on particular occaſions, is not affected with all the diſagreeable paſſions, fear, anger, dejection, grief, melancholy, anxiety, *&c.* But theſe, ſo far as they are natural, and univerſal, make no difference between one man and another, and can never be the object of blame. It is only when the diſpoſition gives a *propenſity* to any of theſe diſagreeable

agreeable paſſions, that they diſfigure the character, and by giving uneaſineſs, convey the ſentiment of diſapprobation to the ſpectator.

NOTE [S], p. 124.

TACIT. hiſt. lib. iii. The author entering upon the narration, ſays, *Laniata veſte, fœdum ſpectaculum ducebatur, multis increpantibus, nullo inlacrimante:* deformitas exitus miſericordiam abſtulerat. To enter thoroughly into this method of thinking, we muſt make allowance for the ancient maxims, that no one ought to prolong his life after it became diſhonourable; but as he had always a right to diſpoſe of it, it then became a duty to part with it.

NOTE [T], p. 124.

THE abſence of a virtue may often be a vice; and that of the higheſt kind; as in the inſtance of ingratitude, as well as meanneſs. Where we expect a beauty, the diſappointment gives an uneaſy ſenſation, and produces a real deformity. An abjectneſs of character, likewiſe, is diſguſtful and contemptible in another view. Where a man has no ſenſe of value in himſelf, we are not likely to have any higher eſtimate of him. And if the ſame perſon, who crouches to his ſuperiors, is inſolent to his inferiors (as often happens) this contrariety of behaviour, inſtead of correcting the former vice, aggravates it extremely by the addition of a vice, ſtill more odious. See ſect. 8.

NOTE [U], p. 154.

IT ſeems certain, both from reaſon and experience, that a rude, untaught ſavage regulates chiefly his love and hatred by the ideas of private utility and injury, and has but faint conceptions of a general rule or ſyſtem of behaviour. The man who ſtands oppoſite to him in battle, he hates heartily, not only for the preſent moment, which is almoſt unavoidable, but for ever after; nor is he ſatisfied without the moſt extreme puniſhment and vengeance. But we, accuſtomed to ſociety, and to more enlarged reflections, conſider, that this man is ſerving his own

country and community; that any man, in the ſame ſituation, would do the ſame; that we ourſelves, in like circumſtances, obſerve a like conduct; that, in general, human ſociety is beſt ſupported on ſuch maxims: And by theſe ſuppoſitions and views, we correct, in ſome meaſure, our ruder and narrower paſſions. And though much of our friendſhip and enmity be ſtill regulated by private conſiderations of benefit and harm, we pay, at leaſt, this homage to general rules, which we are accuſtomed to reſpect, that we commonly pervert our adverſary's conduct, by imputing malice or injuſtice to him, in order to give vent to thoſe paſſions, which ariſe from ſelf-love and private intereſt. When the heart is full of rage, it never wants pretences of this nature; though ſometimes as frivolous, as thoſe from which HORACE, being almoſt cruſhed by the fall of a tree, affects to accuſe of parricide the firſt planter of it.

NOTE [W], p. 188.

THIS theory concerning the origin of property, and conſequently of juſtice, is, in the main, the ſame with that hinted at and adopted by GROTIUS. "Hinc diſcimus, quæ fuerit "cauſa, ob quam a primæva communione rerum primo mobili-"um, deinde & immobilium diſceſſum eſt: nimirum quod cum "non contenti homines veſci ſponte natis, antra habitare, cor-"pore aut nudo agere, aut corticibus arborum ferarumve pellibus "veſtito, vitæ genus exquiſitius delegiſſent, induſtria opus fuit, "quam ſinguli rebus ſingulis adhiberent: Quo minus autem "fructus in commune conferrentur, primum obſtitit locorum, in "quæ homines diſceſſerunt, diſtantia, deinde juſtitiæ & amoris "defectus, per quem fiebat, ut nec in labore, nec in conſum-"tione fructuum, quæ debebat, æqualitas ſervaretur. Simul diſ-"cimus, quomodo res in proprietatem iverint; non animi actu "ſolo, neque enim ſcire alii poterant, quid alii ſuum eſſe vellent, "ut eo abſtinerent, & idem velle plures poterant; ſed pacto "quodam aut expreſſo, ut per diviſionem, aut tacito, ut per oc-"cupationem." De jure belli & pacis. Lib. ii. cap. 2. § 2. art. 4 & 5.

NOTE

NOTE [X], p. 189.

NATural may be oppoſed, either to what is *unuſual, miraculous*, or *artificial*. In the two former ſenſes, juſtice and property are undoubtedly natural. But as they ſuppoſe reaſon, forethought, deſign, and a ſocial union and confederacy among men, perhaps that epithet cannot ſtrictly, in the laſt ſenſe, be applied to them. Had men lived without ſociety, property had never been known, and neither juſtice nor injuſtice had ever exiſted. But ſociety among human creatures, had been impoſſible, without reaſon and forethought. Inferior animals, that unite, are guided by inſtinct, which ſupplies the place of reaſon. But all theſe diſputes are merely verbal.

NOTE [Y], p. 190.

THAT there be a ſeparation or diſtinction of poſſeſſions, and that this ſeparation be ſteady and conſtant; this is abſolutely required by the intereſts of ſociety, and hence the origin of juſtice and property. What poſſeſſions are aſſigned to particular perſons; this is, generally ſpeaking, pretty indifferent; and is often determined by very frivolous views and conſiderations. We ſhall mention a few particulars.

Were a ſociety formed among ſeveral independent members, the moſt obvious rule, which could be agreed on, would be to annex property to *preſent* poſſeſſion, and leave every one a right to what he at preſent enjoys. The relation of poſſeſſion, which takes place between the perſon and the object, naturally draws on the relation of property.

For a like reaſon, occupation or firſt poſſeſſion becomes the foundation of property.

Where a man beſtows labour and induſtry upon any object, which before belonged to no body; as in cutting down and ſhaping a tree, in cultivating a field, &c. the alterations, which he produces, cauſes a relation between him and the object, and naturally engages us to annex it to him by the new relation of property.

perty. This cauſe here concurs with the public utility, which conſiſts in the encouragement given to induſtry and labour.

Perhaps too, private humanity towards the poſſeſſor, concurs, in this inſtance, with the other motives, and engages us to leave with him what he has acquired by his ſweat and labour; and what he has flattered himſelf in the conſtant enjoyment of. For though private humanity can, by no means, be the origin of juſtice; ſince the latter virtue ſo often contradicts the former; yet when the rule of ſeparate and conſtant poſſeſſion is once formed by the indiſpenſible neceſſities of ſociety, private humanity, and an averſion to the doing a hardſhip to another, may, in a particular inſtance, give riſe to a particular rule of property.

I am much inclined to think, that the right of ſucceſſion or inheritance much depends on thoſe connexions of the imagination, and that the relation to a former proprietor begetting a relation to the object, is the cauſe why the property is transferred to a man after the death of his kinſman. It is true; induſtry is more encouraged by the transference of poſſeſſion to children or near relations: But this conſideration will only have place in a cultivated ſociety; whereas the right of ſucceſſion is regarded even among the greateſt Barbarians.

Acquiſition of property by *acceſſion* can be explained no way but by having recourſe to the relations and connexions of the imagination.

The property of rivers, by the laws of moſt nations, and by the natural turn of our thought, is attributed to the proprietors of their banks, excepting ſuch vaſt rivers as the RHINE or the DANUBE, which ſeem too large to follow as an acceſſion the property of the neighbouring fields. Yet even theſe rivers are conſidered as the property of that nation, through whoſe dominions they run; the idea of a nation being of a ſuitable bulk to correſpond with them, and bear them ſuch a relation in the fancy.

The acceſſions, which are made to land, bordering upon rivers, follow the land, ſay the civilians, provided it be made by what they

they call *alluvion*, that is, inſenſibly and imperceptibly; which are circumſtances, that aſſiſt the imagination in the conjunction.

Where there is any conſiderable portion torn at once from one bank and added to another, it becomes not *his* property, whoſe land it falls on, till it unite with the land, and till the trees and plants have ſpread their roots into both. Before that, the thought does not ſufficiently join them.

In ſhort, we muſt ever diſtinguiſh between the neceſſity of a ſeparation and conſtancy in men's poſſeſſion, and the rules, which aſſign particular objects to particular perſons. The firſt neceſſity is obvious, ſtrong, and invincible: The latter may depend on a public utility more light and frivolous, on the ſentiment of private humanity and averſion to private hardſhip, on poſitive laws, on precedents, analogies, and very fine connexions and turns of the imagination.

NOTE [Z], p. 195.

THE term, pride, is commonly taken in a bad ſenſe; but this ſentiment ſeems indifferent, and may be either good or bad, according as it is well or ill founded, and according to the other circumſtances which accompany it. The FRENCH expreſs this ſentiment by the term, *amour propre*, but as they alſo expreſs ſelf-love as well as vanity, by the ſame term, there ariſes thence a great confuſion in ROCHEFOUCAULT, and many of their moral writers.

NOTE [AA], p. 199.

LOVE and eſteem are nearly the ſame paſſion, and ariſe from ſimilar cauſes. The qualities, which produce both, are ſuch as communicate pleaſure. But where this pleaſure is ſevere and ſerious; or where its object is great and makes a ſtrong impreſſion, or where it produces any degree of humility and awe: In all theſe caſes, the paſſion, which ariſes from the pleaſure, is more properly denominated eſteem than love. Benevolence attends both: But is connected with love in a more eminent degree. There ſeems to be ſtill a ſtronger mixture of

pride

pride in contempt than of humility in eſteem; and the reaſon would not be difficult to one, who ſtudied accurately the paſſions. All theſe various mixtures and compoſitions and appearances of ſentiment form a very curious ſubject of ſpeculation, but are wide of our preſent purpoſe. Throughout this enquiry, we always conſider in general, what qualities are a ſubject of praiſe or of cenſure, without entering into all the minute differences of ſentiment, which they excite. It is evident, that whatever is contemned, is alſo diſliked, as well as what is hated; and we here endeavour to take objects, according to their moſt ſimple views and appearances. Theſe ſciences are but too apt to appear abſtract to common readers, even with all the precautions which we can take to clear them from ſuperfluous ſpeculations, and bring them down to every capacity.

NOTE [BB], p. 201.

THE following paſſage of CICERO is worth quoting, as being the moſt clear and expreſs to our purpoſe, that any thing can be imagined, and, in a diſpute, which is chiefly verbal, muſt, on account of the author, carry an authority, from which there can be no appeal.

"Virtus autem, quæ eſt per ſe ipſa laudabilis, et ſine qua nihil laudari poteſt, tamen habet plures partes, quarum alia eſt aliâ ad laudationem aptior. Sunt enim aliæ virtutes, quæ videntur in moribus hominum, et quadam comitate ac beneficentia poſitæ: aliæque in ingenii aliqua facultate, aut animi magnitudine ac robore. Nam clementia, juſtitia, benignitas, fides, fortitudo in periculis communibus, jucunda eſt auditu in laudationibus. Omnes enim hæ virtutes non tam ipſis, qui eas in ſe habent, quam generi hominum fructuoſæ putantur. Sapientia et magnitudo animi, qua omnes res humanæ, tenues et pro nihilo putantur; et in cogitando vis quædam ingenii, et ipſa eloquentia admirationis habet non minus, jucunditatis minus. Ipſos enim magis videtur, quos laudamus, quam illos, apud quos laudamus, ornare ac tueri: ſed tamen in laudenda jungenda ſunt etiam hæc genera virtutum. Ferunt enim

"aures

" aures hominum, cum illa quæ jucunda et grata, tum etiam " illa, quæ mirabilia ſunt in virtute, laudari." *De orat. lib.* ii. *cap.* 89.

I ſuppoſe, if CICERO were now alive, it would be found difficult to fetter his moral ſentiments by narrow ſyſtems; or perſuade him, that no qualities were to be admitted as *virtues*, or acknowledged to be a part of *perſonal merit*, but what were recommended by *The Whole Duty of Man*.

NOTE [CC], p. 231.

DURING the time of the emperors, the ROMANS ſeem to have been more given to intrigues and gallantry than the ENGLISH are at preſent: And the women of condition, in order to retain their lovers, endeavoured to fix a name of reproach on thoſe who were addicted to wenching and low amours. They were called ANCILLARIOLI. See SENECA de beneficiis. Lib. i. cap. 9. See alſo MARTIAL. lib. xii. epig. 58.

NOTE [DD], p. 248.

" FRagilis & laborioſa mortalitas in partes iſta digeſſit, infirmi- " tatis ſuæ memor, ut portionibus quiſquis coleret, quo " maxime indigeret." PLIN. lib. ii. cap. 7. So early as HESIOD's time there were 30,000 deities. *Oper. & Dier.* lib. i. ver. 250. But the taſk to be performed by theſe ſeems ſtill too great for their number. The provinces of the deities were ſo ſubdivided, that there was even a God of *Sneezing*. See ARIST. *Probl.* ſect. 33. cap. 7. The province of copulation, ſuitable to the importance and dignity of it, was divided among ſeveral deities.

NOTE [EE], p. 263.

IT will be eaſy to give a reaſon, why THALES, ANAXIMANDER, and thoſe early philoſophers, who really were atheiſts, might be very orthodox in the pagan creed; and why ANAXAGORAS and SOCRATES, though real theiſts, muſt naturally, in ancient times, be eſteemed impious. The blind, unguided powers of nature, if they could produce men, might alſo produce ſuch beings

beings as JUPITER and NEPTUNE, who being the moſt powerful, intelligent exiſtences in the world, would be proper objects of worſhip. But where a ſupreme intelligence, the firſt cauſe of all, is admitted, theſe capricious beings, if they exiſt at all, muſt appear very ſubordinate and dependent, and conſequently be excluded from the rank of deities. PLATO (de leg. lib. x.) aſſigns this reaſon for the imputation thrown on ANAXAGORAS, viz. his denying the divinity of the ſtars, planets, and other created objects.

NOTE [FF], p. 284.

VERRIUS FLACCUS, cited by PLINY, lib. xxviii. cap. 2. affirmed, that it was uſual for the ROMANS, before they laid ſiege to any town, to invocate the tutelar deity of the place, and by promiſing him equal or greater honours than thoſe he at preſent enjoyed, bribe him to betray his old friends and votaries. The name of the tutelar deity of ROME was for this reaſon kept a moſt religious myſtery; leſt the enemies of the republic ſhould be able, in the ſame manner, to draw him over to their ſervice. For without the name, they thought, nothing of that kind could be practiſed. PLINY ſays, that the common form of invocation was preſerved to his time in the ritual of the pontifs. And MACROBIUS has tranſmitted a copy of it from the ſecret things of SAMMONICUS SERENUS.

NOTE [GG], p. 288.

MOST nations have fallen into this guilt of human ſacrifices; though, perhaps, that impious ſuperſtition has never prevailed very much in any civilized nation, unleſs we except the CARTHAGINIANS. For the TYRIANS ſoon aboliſhed it. A ſacrifice is conceived as a preſent; and any preſent is delivered to the deity by deſtroying it and rendering it uſeleſs to men; by burning what is ſolid, pouring out the liquid, and killing the animate. For want of a better way of doing him ſervice, we do ourſelves an injury; and fancy that we thereby expreſs, at leaſt, the heartineſs of our good-will and adoration. Thus our mercenary devotion deceives ourſelves, and imagines it deceives the deity.

NOTE

NOTE [HH], p. 299.

IT is ſtrange that the EGYPTIAN religion, though ſo abſurd, ſhould yet have borne ſo great a reſemblance to the JEWISH, that ancient writers even of the greateſt genius were not able to obſerve any difference between them. For it is remarkable that both TACITUS and SUETONIUS, when they mention that decree of the ſenate, under TIBERIUS, by which the EGYPTIAN and JEWISH proſelytes were baniſhed from ROME, expreſsly treat theſe religions as the ſame; and it appears, that even the decree itſelf was founded on that ſuppoſition. "Actum & de ſa-"cris ÆGYPTIIS, JUDAICISQUE pellendis; factumque patrum "conſultum, ut quatuor millia libertini generis *ea ſuperſtitione* "infecta, quîs idonea ætas, in inſulam Sardiniam veherentur, "coercendis illic latrociniis; & ſi ob gravitatem cœli interiſſent, "*vile damnum:* Ceteri cederent ITALIA, niſi certam ante diem "profanos ritus exuiſſent." TACIT. ann. lib. ii. c. 85. "Ex-"ternas cæremonias, ÆGYPTIOS, JUDAICOSQUE ritus com-"peſcuit; coactis qui *ſuperſtitione ea* tenebantur, religioſas veſtes "cum inſtrumento omni comburere, &c." SUETON. TIBER. c. 36. Theſe wiſe heathens, obſerving ſomething in the general air, and genius, and ſpirit of the two religions to be the ſame, eſteemed the differences of their dogmas too frivolous to deſerve any attention.

NOTE [II], p. 310.

XENOPHON's conduct, as related by himſelf, is, at once, an inconteſtable proof of the general credulity of mankind in thoſe ages, and the incoherencies, in all ages, of men's opinions in religious matters. That great captain and philoſopher, the diſciple of SOCRATES, and one who has delivered ſome of the moſt refined ſentiments with regard to a deity, gave all the following marks of vulgar, pagan ſuperſtition. By SOCRATES's advice, he conſulted the oracle of DELPHI, before he would engage in the expedition of CYRUS. De exped. lib. iii. p. 294. ex edit. Leuncl. Sees a dream the night after the generals were ſeized; which he pays great regard to, but thinks ambiguous. Id. p. 295. He and the whole army regard ſneezing as a very

lucky omen. Id. p. 300. Has another dream, when he comes to the river CENTRITES, which his fellow-general, CHEROSOPHUS, alſo pays great regard to. Id. lib. iv. p. 323. The GREEKS, ſuffering from a cold north wind, ſacrifice to it; and the hiſtorian obſerves, that it immediately abated. Id. p. 329. XENOPHON conſults the ſacrifices in ſecret, before he would form any reſolution with himſelf about ſettling a colony. Lib. v. p. 359. He was himſelf a very ſkilful augur. Id. p. 361. Is determined by the victims to refuſe the ſole command of the army which was offered him. Lib. vi. p. 273. CLEANDER, the SPARTAN, though very deſirous of it, refuſes it for the ſame reaſon. Id. p. 392. XENOPHON mentions an old dream with the interpretation given him, when he firſt joined CYRUS. P. 373. Mentions alſo the place of HERCULES's deſcent into hell as believing it, and ſays the marks of it are ſtill remaining. Id. p. 375. Had almoſt ſtarved the army, rather than lead them to the field againſt the auſpices. Id. p. 382, 383. His friend, EUCLIDES, the augur, would not believe that he had brought no money from the expedition; till he (EUCLIDES) ſacrificed, and then he ſaw the matter clearly in the Exta. Lib. vii. p. 425. The ſame philoſopher, propoſing a project of mines for the increaſe of the ATHENIAN revenues, adviſes them firſt to conſult the oracle. De rat. red. p. 392. That all this devotion was not a farce, in order to ſerve a political purpoſe, appears both from the facts themſelves, and from the genius of that age, when little or nothing could be gained by hypocriſy. Beſides, XENOPHON, as appears from his Memorabilia, was a kind of heretic in thoſe times, which no political devotee ever is. It is for the ſame reaſon, I maintain, that NEWTON, LOCKE, CLARKE, &c. being *Arians* or *Socinians*, were very ſincere in the creed they profeſſed: And I always oppoſe this argument to ſome libertines, who will needs have it, that it was impoſſible but that theſe great philoſophers muſt have been hypocrites.

NOTE [KK], p. 317.

BACCHUS, a divine being, is repreſented by the heathen mythology as the inventor of dancing and the theatre. Plays were anciently, even a part of public worſhip on the moſt ſolemn occaſions,

occaſions, and often employed in times of peſtilence, to appeaſe the offended deities. But they have been zealouſly proſcribed by the godly in latter ages; and the playhouſe, according to a learned divine, is the porch of hell.

But in order to ſhow more evidently, that it is poſſible for a religion to repreſent the divinity in ſtill a more immoral and unamiable light than he was pictured by the ancients, we ſhall cite a long paſſage from an author of taſte and imagination, who was ſurely no enemy to Chriſtianity. It is the Chevalier RAMSAY, a writer, who had ſo laudable an inclination to be orthodox, that his reaſon never found any difficulty, even in the doctrines which free-thinkers ſcruple the moſt, the trinity, incarnation, and ſatisfaction: His humanity alone, of which he ſeems to have had a great ſtock, rebelled againſt the doctrines of eternal reprobation and predeſtination. He expreſſes himſelf thus: 'What 'ſtrange ideas,' ſays he, 'would an Indian or a Chineſe philoſo-'pher have of our holy religion, if they judged by the ſchemes 'given of it by our modern free-thinkers, and phariſaical doctors 'of all ſects? According to the odious and too *vulgar* ſyſtem of 'theſe incredulous ſcoffers and credulous ſcriblers, "The God of "the Jews is a moſt cruel, unjuſt, partial, and fantaſtical being. "He created, about 6000 years ago, a man and a woman, and "placed them in a fine garden of ASIA, of which there are no "remains. This garden was furniſhed with all ſorts of trees, "fountains, and flowers. He allowed them the uſe of all the "fruits of this beautiful garden, except of one, that was planted "in the midſt thereof, and that had in it a ſecret virtue of pre-"ſerving them in continual health and vigour of body and mind, "of exalting their natural powers and making them wiſe. The "devil entered into the body of a ſerpent, and ſolicited the firſt "woman to eat of this forbidden fruit; ſhe engaged her huſband "to do the ſame. To puniſh this ſlight curioſity and natural "deſire of life and knowledge, God not only threw our firſt pa-"rents out of paradiſe, but he condemned all their poſterity to "temporal miſery, and the greateſt part of them to eternal pains, "though the ſouls of theſe innocent children have no more re-"lation to that of ADAM than to thoſe of NERO and MAHO-

"MET;

" MET; ſince, according to the ſcholaſtic drivellers, fabuliſts, " and mythologiſts, all ſouls are created pure, and infuſed imme- " diately into mortal bodies, ſo ſoon as the fœtus is formed. To " accompliſh the barbarous, partial decree of predeſtination and " reprobation, God abandoned all nations to darkneſs, idolatry, " and ſuperſtition, without any ſaving knowledge or ſalutary " graces; unleſs it was one particular nation, whom he choſe as " his peculiar people. This choſen nation was, however, the " moſt ſtupid, ungrateful, rebellious and perfidious of all na- " tions. After God had thus kept the far greater part of all " the human ſpecies, during near 4000 years, in a reprobate " ſtate, he changed all of a ſudden, and took a fancy for other " nations, beſide the JEWS. Then he ſent his only begotten " Son to the world, under a human form, to appeaſe his wrath, " ſatisfy his vindictive juſtice, and die for the pardon of ſin. " Very few nations, however, have heard of this goſpel; and " and all the reſt, though left in invincible ignorance, are damned " without exception, or any poſſibility of remiſſion. The greateſt " part of thoſe who have heard of it, have changed only ſome " ſpeculative notions about God, and ſome external forms in " worſhip: For, in other reſpects, the bulk of Chriſtians have " continued as corrupt as the reſt of mankind in their morals; " yea, ſo much the more perverſe and criminal, that their lights " were greater. Unleſs it be a very ſmall ſelect number, all " other Chriſtians, like the pagans, will be for ever damned; the " great ſacrifice offered up for them will become void and of no " effect; God will take delight for ever, in their torments and " blaſphemies; and though he can, by one *fiat* change their " hearts, yet they will remain for ever unconverted and uncon- " vertible, becauſe he will be for ever unappeaſable and irrecon- " cileable. It is true, that all this makes God odious, a hater " of ſouls, rather than a lover of them; a cruel, vindictive " tyrant, an impotent or a wrathful dæmon, rather than an all- " powerful, beneficent father of ſpirits: Yet all this is a my- " ſtery. He has ſecret reaſons for his conduct, that are impe- " netrable; and though he appears unjuſt and barbarous, yet we " muſt believe the contrary, becauſe what is injuſtice, crime, " cruelty, and the blackeſt malice in us, is in him juſtice, mercy,

" and

" and ſovereign goodneſs." ' Thus the incredulous free think-
' ers, the judaizing Chriſtians, and the fataliſtic doctors have
' diſfigured and diſhonoured the ſublime myſteries of our holy
' faith; thus they have confounded the nature of good and evil;
' transformed the moſt monſtrous paſſions into divine attributes,
' and ſurpaſſed the pagans in blaſphemy, by aſcribing to the
' eternal nature, as perfections, what makes the moſt horrid
' crimes amongſt men. The groſſer pagans contented themſelves
' with divinizing luſt, inceſt, and adultery; but the predeſtina-
' rian doctors have divinized cruelty, wrath, fury, vengeance,
' and all the blackeſt vices.' See the Chevalier RAMSAY's philo-
ſophical principles of natural and revealed religion, Part. II.
p. 401.

The ſame author aſſerts, in other places, that the *Arminian* and *Moliniſt* ſchemes ſerve very little to mend the matter: And having thus thrown himſelf out of all received ſects of Chriſtianity, he is obliged to advance a ſyſtem of his own, which is a kind of *Origeniſm*, and ſuppoſes the pre-exiſtence of the ſouls both of men and beaſts, and the eternal ſalvation and converſion of all men, beaſts, and devils. But this notion, being quite peculiar to himſelf, we need not treat of. I thought the opinions of this ingenious author very curious; but I pretend not to warrant the juſtneſs of them.

4 AP 63

INDEX.

BRITISH MUSEUM

*** The *Numeral Letters* refer to the Volume, and the *Figures* to the Page.

A

ABASEMENT, not the natural Conſequence of Polytheiſm, iv. 289.
Abſtraction, what, iii. 297, *Note* [P].
Abſurdity, not always the greateſt in Polytheiſm, iv. 202.
———, greedily coveted by popular Religions, iv. 295.
Acheans employed Force in forming their League, ii. 278.
———, their Number, ii. 239.
Addiſon quoted, i. 99, 239. iii. 244.
Æſchynes quoted, ii. 99, 232.
Æſchynes Socraticus quoted, iv. 204.
Ætolians, their Number, ii. 238.
Agathocles, the Tyrant, his Cruelty, ii. 207. 364, *Note* [M].
Agreeableneſs, a Source of Merit, iv. 119.
———, to Ourſelf, iv. 120, *&c.*
———, to Others, iv. 135, 136, *&c.*
Agriculture, how beſt encouraged, ii. 13, 14, 218, 219.
Alcoran, its Ethics, i. 287.
Alexander the Impoſtor of Lucian, his Artifice, iii. 168.
Alexander the Great, his Saying to Parmenio, iii. 122.
———, his Toleration, iv. 287.
———, his Emulation of Bacchus, iv. 296.
Alexandria, its Size, and Numbers of its Inhabitants, ii. 245.
Allegiance, its Obligation, whence, ii. 287. iv. 60.
Allegory has naturally place in Polytheiſm, iv. 265, 266.
Anacreon quoted, iv. 225.
Analogies, and ſometimes ſlight, have Influence in Juriſprudence, iv. 49, 50, 190.

Anaxagoras, the first Theist, and the first accused of Atheism, iv. 347. *Note* [EE].
Ancillarioli, what, iv. 347. *Note* [CC].
Angels, modern, equivalent to the Deities of the Philosophers, iv. 265.
Animals, their Reason, iv. 147, *&c.*
Antioch, its Size, ii. 245.
Antipater, the Cyreniac, his Saying, i. 217.
APPIAN Alexandrinus quoted, ii. 101, 163, 190, 197, 202, 205, 211, 226, 258. iv. 213.
Arnobius quoted, iv. 259, 269.
ARIOSTO, his Character, i. 291, quoted 100.
ARISTIDES the Sophist quoted, ii. 367, *Note* [T].
Aristocracy, Polish, Venetian, in what respects different, i. 17, 18.
ARISTOPHANES not impious according to the Ideas of Antiquity, iv. 258, 259.
——— quoted, ii. 183.
ARISTOTLE quoted, i. 266. ii. 183, 235, 248. iii. 33. iv. 201, 347. *Note* [DD].
Armstrong, Dr. quoted, iv. 199.
ARRIAN quoted, i. 150. ii. 133, 215. iv. 287, 290.
Atheism, whether possible, ii. 209
ATHENÆUS quoted, ii. 230, 232, 235, 374. *Note* [BB].
ATHENS, i. 107. ii. 9, 100, 210, 231, 232, 234, 277.
Athenians, on what they chiefly valued themselves, iv. 131.
Athenian Man of Merit, iv. 207, 208, *&c.*
Augustine (Saint) his Dogmatism, iv. 302.
Augustus, his Impiety mixed with Superstition, iv. 260.
——— his Superstition, iv. 304.
——— his Age compared with that of Camillus, ii. 10.
Aunoi, Madame, quoted, i. 232.
Aurelius, Marcus, his Theism, iv. 265. his Superstition, 309.
Austria, House of, Causes of its Decay, ii. 119.
Authority of Teachers, useful to check it, i. 141. 142.

B

BACON, quoted, i. 56, 102, 261. ii. 21. iii. 181. iv. 78, 273. Balance of Power, i. 37. ii. 112, *&c.*—Of Trade, ii. 80, *&c.*—Of Property, i. 37, 47.
Banks and Paper Credit, whether advantageous, ii. 45, 92, 93.
Barbarity an Attribute of the Deity in popular Religions, iv. 324.
Bartoli's Plans of ancient Buildings, ii. 241.
Bayle quoted, iv. 291, 334.
Beauty, why the object of Pride, iii. 249.

BELIEF, what, iii. 72, &c.
Bellarmine, Cardinal, his Saying, iv. 291.
Benevolence, i. 93, disintereſted real, iv. 12, &c. its kinds, 15, a Virtue, 23, from its Utility, 25. 26, from its Agreeableneſs, 130.
Berkeley, Dr. a real Sceptic, iii. 296 *Note* [N], quoted, i. 261.
Berne, Canton of, its Treaſure, ii. 100.
Bentivoglio quoted, i. 263.
Boccace quoted, i. 220.
Boileau quoted, iv. 123.
Bolingbroke quoted, i. 30, 84.
Boulainvilliers quoted, ii. 376. iv. 277.
Braſidas, his Saying, iv. 291.
Brumoy, Pere, quoted, iv. 258.

C

CÆSAR quoted, i. 328, *Note* [K]; ii. 197, 257, 259. iv. 258.
Cambyſes, his Extravagance, iv. 295.
Capitolinus quoted, ii. 293.
Caprice, an Attribute of the Deity in popular Religions, iv. 324.
Carliſle, Earl of, quoted, i. 156.
Cartes, Des, quoted, i. 378. iii. 287, *Note* [D].
Carthage, its Size and Number of its Inhabitants, ii. 229.
Carthaginians, their human Sacrifices, iv. 348, *Note* [GG].
Catholics, Roman, Genius of their Religion, i 85.
——————— led into Abſurdities, iv. 297.
CATO de re ruſtica, quoted, ii. 187.
Cato of Utica, his Speech to Cæſar, ii 30.
CAUSE and EFFECT its Idea, whence, iii. 44, 45, &c. Its Definition, 111, 289, *Note* [G].
Cauſes moral, how far they contribute to national Characters, i. 248.
——— Phyſical, how far, i. 258.
Cauſation, a Reaſon of Aſſociation, iii. 29, 77, 78, &c.
Cavalier Party, i. 72.
Cervantes, his Merit, i. 239, quoted, 295.
Chance, what, iii. 84. Its Influence in Society, i. 130.
Characters, national, i. 247, &c.
Charles, the 12th of Sweden, his Character, iv. 131.
Chaſtity, its Merit, whence, iv. 62. 63.
Cheerfulneſs, its Merit, whence, iv. 119.
China, its Excellence and Defects, i. 142.
Chriſtian Religion founded in Faith, not in Reaſon, iii. 182.

Cicero quoted, i. 21, 104, 111, 113, 116, 217. ii. 126, 177, 205, 217, 229, 242, 261, 357, *Note* [A]. iii. 79. iv. 24, 28, 200, 226, 301, 302, 311, 323.
City, Reasons which limit the Greatness of every City, ii. 249.
Cleanliness, it Merit, whence, iv. 143.
Clergy, why no Friends to Liberty, i. 69.
Cold, greater in ancient Times, ii 251, 252.
Colonesi and Orsini, Parties in modern Rome, i. 58.
Columella quoted, ii. 78, 176, 181, 188, 189, 254, 262, 360, *Note* [F].
Comitia centuriata & tributa, their different Powers, ii. 161, 162, 163, 164.
Commerce, its Advantages, ii. 7, 8. foreign, its advantages, 16, 17.
Commonwealth, perfect, Idea of it, ii. 331, *&c.*
Companionable Qualities, iv. 136, 137.
Comparison, its Effect, i. 88. necessary to forming the Taste, 301.
Comte, Pere le, quoted, iv. 257.
Condé, Prince of, a Saying of his, i. 139.
Confucius, his Disciples Deists, i. 84.
Congreve, his Character, i. 242.
Conjunction frequent, constant, the only Circumstance from which we know Cause and Effect, iii. 102, 108, 119, *&c.*
Connexion necessary, our Idea of it, iii. 89, 90, *&c.*
Constantine, Emperor, his Innovation, i. 130.
Constitution, British, i. 30, 50, 51, 52.
Contiguity, a Reason of Association, iii. 29, 76.
Contract Original, ii. 268, 269, *&c.*
Conventions, whether the Source of Justice, iv. 187, 188.
Conviction, strongest, but not more general, in Theism, iv. 295, 296.
Corn distributed in Rome, ii. 242, 243.
Corneille, his Character, i. 242.
Corpus juris civilis quoted, ii. 203, 362, *Note* [I].
Courage, how far national, i. 264, 265.
——— its Merit, whence, iv. 124.
Country Party, i. 32, 69, 70.
Court Party, i. 32, 69, 70.
Creation or Formation of the World enters not into the primitive Religion, iv. 255, 256.
Credit public, its Abuses, ii. 133, 134, &c.
Curtius, Quintus, quoted, i. 267. ii. 371. iv. 260, 269.
Custom or Habit the Source of experimental Reasoning, iii. 67.
——— the great Guide of Life, iii. 68.
Customs, some remarkable ones, ii. 155, 156, *&c.*
Cyrus boasts of his Drunkenness, i. 267.

D

DARIUS Hyſtaſpes records his Ability in Drinking, on his Tombſtone, i. 267.
Datames, the only Barbarian a General, ii. 33.
Decency, its Merit, whence, iv. 142.
Debt, public, its Advantages, ii. 137.
——— its Diſadvantages, ii. 139, 140.
Deiſts united with the Independents, i. 84.
Delicacy of Paſſion, how hurtful, i. 3, 4, 5, *&c.*
——— of Taſte, how advantageous, i. 3, 4, 5. what it is, 295. whence its Merit, iv. 133.
Democracy without a Repreſentative, hurtful, i. 17.
DEMOSTHENES his Character, i. 120. quoted, i. 113. ii. 99, 113, 156, 159, 177, 183, 197, 216, 234, 365, *Note* [N]. 366, *Note* [R]. iv. 125, 229.
Deſire, Averſion, iii. 233.
DIODORUS SICULUS his Character, ii. 366, *Note* [P].
——— Superſtitious, yet not a Theiſt, iv. 261.
——— Quoted, i. 266, 320, *Note* [A]. 321, *Note* [B]. ii. 9, 99, 115, 198, 199, 207, 208, 210, 214, 215, 217, 224, 228, 231, 236, 238, 245, 252, 258, 266, 374, *Note* [BB]. iv. 28, 254, 257, 261, 319, 323, 339, *Note* [O].
DIOGENES LAERTIUS quoted, ii. 224. iv. 269.
Diogenes, the Cynic, his Character, iv. 234, 235.
DION CASSIUS quoted, ii. 76.
DIONYSIUS Halycarnaſſæus quoted, i. 237, 328, *Note* [I]. ii. 212, 241. iv. 252, 264.
Dionyſius the Tyrant, his Maſſacres, ii. 207.
——— his Army, ii. 9, 227.
Diſcretion, its Merit, whence, iv. 100.
Diviſion of Property, uſeful, ii. 200.
Domeſtic Situation of Ancients and Moderns, ii. 74, 75.
Dorians and Ionians, i. 265.
Dryden quoted, i. 249. iv. 301.
Dubos, Abbe, quoted, i. 271. ii. 87, 251, 262.

E

ECLECTICS, a Sect, i. 143.
Egyptians, why Perſecutors, iv. 286.
Egyptian Religion, a Difficulty in it, iv. 301.
——— and Jewiſh reſembling, iv. 349, *Note* [HH].
Elizabeth, Queen, whether her Reſurrection could be proved, iii. 179, 180.

Eloquence, i. 109, 110, &c.
Empires, great, deſtructive, ii. 122, 123.
Energy, its Idea, iii. 92, 93.
Engliſh, their nati nal Character, whence, i. 257.
Enthuſiaſm, defended and explained, i. 78, 79, 80.
Envy, whence, iii. 265.
Epaminondas, his Character, iv. 339, *Note* [O].
Epictetus, his Idea of Virtue, iv. 201. his Superſtition, iv. 310.
Epicurus, his Apology. iii. 190, 191.
——— why he took himſelf to Philoſophy, iv. 263.
Epicurean, i. 163.
Ergaſtula, very frequent anciently, ii. 176, 177.
Euclid treats not of the Beauty of the Circle, i. 203.
Euripides quoted, iv. 253
Europe, its Advantages from its Situation, i. 142.
Evidence, natural and moral, of the ſame Kind, iii. 129.
Exchange helps to keep the Balance of Trade, ii. 85.
Exchange, difficult to know, whether for or againſt a Nation, ii. 80.
Exiles in Greece, how numerous, ii. 208.
EXPERIENCE, Source of all our Reaſoning with regard to Fact, iii. 46, &c.
——— why we reaſon from Experience, iii. 52, 53, 126.
——— often the ſame with what we call Reaſon, iii. 284, *Note* [B].
Expoſing Children, ii. 192. approved by Seneca, ibid.

F

FACT, Matters of, one Object of Reaſon, iii. 42, 43.
Factions, violent and bloody, among the Ancients, ii. 204, 205.
Fairies modern, equivalent to the vulgar Deities of Antiquity, iv. 256
Fame, why deſired, iii. 252.
Fenelon, his Ethics, i. 286.
Flattery, its Influence in Religion, iv. 274.
Florus, quoted, ii. 191.
Flux and Reflux of Theiſm and Polytheiſm, iv. 281, &c.
Fontaine, la, quoted, iv. 230.
FONTENELLE, Cenſure of his Paſtorals, i. 242.
——— quoted, i. 7, 217, 272. ii. 375, *Note* [DD]. iv. 17, 258.
French Man of Merit, iv. 217.
——— their firſt Queſtion, with regard to a Stranger, iv. 137.
Fregoſi and Adorni, Parties of Genoa, i. 58.

Frugality, its Merit, whence, iv. 102.
Funding, the dangerous Tendency of, ii. 136.

G

GAllantry of Civility, i. 154.
——— of Intrigues, iv. 231.
Gamesters and Sailors, why superstitious, iv. 252.
Gaul, Number of its Inhabitants, ii. 258.
Gee, Mr. quoted, ii. 82.
General Rules, their Influence, iii. 261, iv. 63.
Genoa, its Government and Bank, i. 26.
Getes immortal, their Faith, iv. 280.
Golden Age not susceptible of Justice, iv. 41.
Good Sense, how far essential to Taste, i. 304.
Gorgias Leontinus, his Eloquence, i. 321.
Greece, its Advantages from its Situation, i. 142.
——— its whole military Force, ii. 240.
——— Numbers of its Inhabitants, ii. 255.
Grotius quoted, iv. 342, *Note* [W].
Guelf and Ghibelline Parties, i. 59.
GUICCIARDIN quoted, ii. 31. iv. 203.
Gustavus Vaza, i. 70.

H

HArdouën, Pere, quoted, ii. 369, *Note* [X].
Harrington, his Oceana, censured, ii. 333.
——— quoted, i. 47, 101. ii. 333.
Heliogabalus, a conic Stone, iv. 269.
Henry IV. of France, his Character, iv. 131.
——— a Saying of his, ii. 360, *Note* [E].
Henry the IVth and VIIth of England, their Title, ii. 278.
Helvetia, its Inhabitants, ii. 260.
Hereditary Right, how important, ii. 316.
Heresy, Appellation rests commonly on the side of Reason: Examples, iv. 294.
Hero-worship, iv. 267.
HERODIAN quoted, ii. 244, 245, 257, 293. iv. 269.
HERODOTUS quoted, ii. 215, 230, 239. iv. 126, 258, 268, 281, 286, 295, 315, 319.
Hertha, Goddess of the Saxons, iv. 271.
HESIOD, not a Theist properly speaking, iv. 260.
——— Inconsistency in his Theology, iv. 278.
——— quoted, ii. 186. iv. 260, 267, 278, 347, *Note* [DD].

Hiero, King of Syracuſe, his Policy, ii. 118.
Hirtius quoted, ii. 260.
Homer, his Character, i. 293. his Ethics, i. 286. iv. 126. Unity of his Fable, iii. 39. Inconſiſtency of his Theology, iv. 277. quoted, iv. 258, 267, 277.
Homer and Heſiod, canonical Books of ancient Paganiſm, iv. 260.
Honeſty the beſt Policy, iv. 165.
Hope and Fear defended, iii. 233, 234.
Horace quoted, i. 101, 132, 150, 159, 240, 313. ii. 181, 182, 251, 372, *Note* [Z]. iii. 239. iv. 79, 119, 204, 225, 299.
Hoſtis, its Signification in old Latin, ii. 357.
Human Life, general Idea of it, i. 223.
——— Nature, its Dignity, i. 86.
Humility, its Cauſes, iii. 245.
Huſbandmen, what Proportion they bear to Manufacturers, ii. 7.
Hutchinſon, Mr. quoted, ii. 149.
Hyde de Religione veterum Perſarum, quoted, iv. 280, 287.

I

Jansenists, their Genius, i. 85. iii. 293, 294.
Ice, Reports of it not credible to an Indian, iii. 160.
Ideas, their Aſſociation, iii. 28, 29, *&c.* 75.
——— their Origin, ii. 20, 21, *&c.*
Idolatry, its Origin from Polytheiſm, iv. 267.
Jeſuits, their Refinements, iv. 334.
Jews, their national Character, whence, iv. 349, *Note* [HH].
——— Reaſon of their Inſurrection, iv. 303.
Jewiſh Religion and Egyptian reſembling, iv. 349, *Note* [HH].
Ignorance of Cauſes the Origin of Polytheiſm, iv. 250.
Immaculate Conception, a popular Opinion, iv. 276.
Immortality of the Soul, on what founded, iii. 198, 199.
Impiety of popular Religions, iv. 312, 313.
Impreſſions, what, iii. 21, 22.
Impotence and Barrenneſs, iv. 113.
Inceſt, whence its Crime, iv. 64.
Independents, their Genius, i. 81.
Indians juſtly incredulous with regard to Ice, iii. 160.
Induſtry, its Merit, whence, iv. 101.
Inſtructions to Members, i. 38, 39.
Intereſt, private, how far the Foundation of Government, i. 33.
public, ibid.
Intereſt, its Lowneſs, whence, ii. 65. uſeful, 73.
Johnſon, Ben. his Character, ii. 362.
Ionians and Dorians, Tribes of Greeks, i. 265.

Joſephus quoted, ii. 371, 374.
Joy, Grief, explained, iii. 233.
Iphicrates, a Saying of his, iv. 141.
Isocrates quoted, ii. 183, 208, 210.
Ireland, factious, ii. 371, *Note* [Y].
Iriſh, their Idea of Merit, iv. 127.
Italians, Cauſe of their Effeminacy, ii. 33.
Italy, ancient and modern, Number of its Inhabitants, ii. 261.
Julian quoted, ii. 226.
Juſtice, Source of its Merit, iv. 33. farther explained, 183.
Juſtin quoted, ii. 240, 261.
Juſtinian quoted, i. 160.
Juvenal quoted, i. 150, 262. ii. 189, 251, 262. iv. 24, 311.

L

Lampridius quoted, ii. 222.
Laws of the twelve Tables, i. 136.
Laws of Juſtice, whence derived, iv. 45.
—— of Nature, iv. 60.
Louis XIV. Numbers of his Armies, ii. 31.
Liberty and Neceſſity, a Diſpute of Words, iii. 116, 117.
Liberty, civil, its Advantages, i. 96, 97, &c. 132, 133, 134.
Liberty of the Preſs, why peculiar to Great Britain, i. 9, 10, 11, 12.
Lipſius, Juſtus, quoted, ii. 186.
Livy, a ſincere Religioniſt, iv. 309. quoted, i. 27, 58, 256. ii. 10, 100, 117, 197, 207, 214, 368, *Note* [BB]. iv. 202, 318.
Locke, Mr. quoted, i. 101. ii. 295. iii. 84, 94, 243, 283, *Note* [A], 287, *Note* [D]
Longinus quoted, i. 113, 118. iv. 122, 258.
Louveſtein Party in Holland, i. 70.
Love and Hatred, whence derived, iii. 263.
Lucan quoted, ii. 190.
Lucian quoted, i. 219. ii. 362, *Note* [K], 366, *Note* [R]. iii. 168, 186. iv. 109, 219, 257, 260, 308, 314, 316.
Lucretius, his Character, i. 241. quoted, 250. iii. 176. iv. 268.
Luxury, its different Senſes, ii. 24. its Advantages, 27, 28. its Diſadvantages, 39, 40.
Luxurious Ages moſt happy, ii. 26, 29. moſt virtuous, ibid.
Lysias, Genius of his Eloquence, i. 123. quoted, ii. 204, 206, 216, 225, 229, 233, 237. iv. 229.

M

MACHIAVEL, his Reflection on Chriſtianity, iv. 291. quoted, i. 23, 24, 96, 312. ii. 334. iv. 101, 291.
Magians, their Faith, iv. 279.
Maillet, Monſieur, his Account of Egypt, quoted, ii. 191, 255.
Malebranche, quoted, iii. 287, *Note* [D]. iv. 332, *Note* [C].
Malice, whence it is derived, iii. 265.
Mandeville, Dr. quoted, ii. 41.
Manilius quoted, iv. 257.
Marcellinus, Ammianus, quoted, ii. 371, *Note* [Y].
MARTIAL quoted, ii. 181, 190. 262. iv. 347. *Note* [CC].
Mary, Virgin, became a Deity among the Catholics, iv. 276.
Maſſacres, ancient, enumerated from Diodorus Siculus, ii. 363, *Note* [M].
Mathematics, their Foundation, iii. 297, *Note* [P], their Advantages, 89.
Maurice, Prince of Orange, his Saying, iii. 140.
Melon, Monſieur, quoted, ii. 7, 358, *Note* [C].
Memory, its Merit, whence derived, iv. 107.
Menander, quoted, i. 325, *Note* [H].
Merit, perſonal, how the Object of Pride, iii. 246.
——— delineated, iv. 145, 146, *&c.*
Metaphyſics, what, iii. 9, 10.
Milton, the Unity of his Fable, iii. 39.
Mine, Thine, iv. 49.
MIRACLES, on what their Evidence is founded, iii. 153, 154.
——— defined, iii. 160, one mentioned by De Retz, 172.
Mixture of Affections, iii. 239.
Modeſty, whence its Merit, iv. 138.
Moliere, i. 161.
Moliniſts, their Genius, i. 85. iii. 293.
Monarchy, elective, hereditary, which preferable, i. 19.
Monarchy, and Republic, their Advantages and Diſadvantages with regard to the Arts, i. 146, 147, 148.
Money, its continued Encreaſe advantageous, ii. 47, 48.
——— its Diffuſion advantageous, ii. 52, 53.
Montaigne quoted, iv. 139.
MONTESQUIEU quoted, ii. 171, 263. iv. 332.
Monumentum Ancyrianum quoted, ii. 242.
Morals, their Standard, i. 285.
——— not fluctuating, iv. 223, 224.
Morality hurt by popular Religions, iv. 317, 318, 319.
Moral Cauſes, have chief Influence on Populouſneſs, ii. 173.
Muſcovites, their Manners, i. 157.

N

NATURE, State of, deſcribed, iv. 40. imaginary, iv. 331, *Note* [B].
Natural, in what Senſe Juſtice natural, iv. 343, *Note* [X].
Navigation, ancient, how imperfect, ii. 217.
NECESSITY, its definition, iii. 118, 137.
Negroes, their Character, i. 329, *Note* [M].
Nepos, Cornelius, quoted, ii. 182.
Neri, and Bianchi, Parties in Florence, i. 53.
Newton, Sir Iſaac, his Rule of philoſophizing, iv. 59.
Newton, Locke, Clarke, Arians, and ſincere, iv. 350, *Note* [II].
Nicholas, Saint, became a Deity among the Muſcovites, iii. 276.
Niſus, or ſtrong Endeavour, not the Origin of the Idea of Power, iii. 286, *Note* [C].
Northern Nation, their Swarms, no Proof of Populouſneſs, ii. 256.
Numatianus, Claudius Rutilius, his Contempt of the Jewiſh, and conſequently of the Chriſtian Religion, iv. 303.

O

OBEDIENCE, paſſive, ii. 297, 298, 299.
Obligation, intereſted, to Virtue, iv. 159, 160.
Olympiodorus quoted, ii. 370.
Opinion, the real Foundation of Government, i. 33.
Orange, family of, their Partizans, i. 70.
Oratoribus, Dialog. de, quoted, i. 236.
Oſtraciſm of Athens, Petaliſm of Syracuſe, ii. 114.
OVID quoted, i. 131, 150. ii. 176, 253, 256. iv. 257, 261, 317.

P

PAINTERS, modern, unhappy in their Subjects, i. 282.
Paper Credit and Banks, whether advantageous, ii. 45, 92, 93.
Paris, L'Abbe de, his Miracles, iii. 293, 294.
Parliament, how far it ſhould be independent, i. 42, 43, &c.
Parnel, Dr. his Character as a Writer, i. 244.
Parties in general, i. 55, perſonal, 57, real, 60, 61.
——— of Great Britain, i. 67, 68, 69.
Paſcal, his Character, iv. 234, 235, quoted, 295.
Paſſions, their Kinds, iii. 232, their Objects and Cauſes, 241, 242.

PATERCULUS quoted, ii. 100, 227, 261.
Pathetic and Sublime, iv. 133.
Pauſanias quoted, ii. 239.
Pay, Proportion between Officers and Soldiers anciently, ii. 197.
Pericles, his Eloquence, i. 125.
Peripatetics, their Mediums, iv. 96, 97.
Perſecution, whence derived, i. 63, 64, naturally attends the Principle of Unity of God, iv. 285.
Perſia, ancient, whether poſſeſſed of an Ariſtocracy, i. 319.
Perſonify, to, natural, and the Origin of Polytheiſm, iv. 250.
Petrarch quoted, i. 317.
PETRONIUS quoted, ii. 182, 252. iv. 225.
Phædrus quoted, iv. 335, *Note* [E].
Philip of Macedon, his Character in Demoſthenes, iv. 125.
——— his Occupation in the infernal Regions, i. 219.
Philip II. of Spain, i. 105.
Philoſophy, the two Kinds of it, the obvious and abſtruſe, iii. 3.
Phyſical Cauſes, their ſmall Influence on Populouſneſs, ii. 169, 170.
Pindar, his Scholiaſt quoted, ii. 235.
PLATO quoted, i. 97. ii. 133, 229, 239, 295. iv. 205, 222, 310, 331, *Note* [B], 335, *Note* [E], 348, *Note* [EE].
Platoniſt, i. 188.
Plautus quoted, ii. 232.
PLINY the Elder quoted, i. 156, 278, 321, *Note* [C]. ii. 61, 100, 189, 245, 249, 363, 368, 373. iv. 246, 304, 347, 348.
——— A Paſſage of his examined, ii. 369.
PLINY the Younger, his Houſe, i. 241, quoted, i. 156. ii. 78. iv. 264.
PLUTARCH quoted, i. 152, 153, 216, 218, 254, 267. ii. 47, 80, 133, 158, 159, 176, 184, 190, 192, 199, 203, 207, 214, 226, 228, 229, 235, 260, 265. iv. 24, 88, 123, 223, 265, 286, 291, 315.
——— A Paſſage of his examined, ii. 263.
Politeneſs, whence its Merit, iv. 135.
Politics, a Science, i. 14, 15, *&c.*
Political Cuſtoms of Ancients and Moderns compared, ii. 193, 194.
Pollia and Papiria, Roman Tribes, their Animoſity, i. 58.
POLYBIUS quoted, i. 22, 151, 321, *Note* [B]. ii. 60, 99, 116, 118, 197, 225, 238, 253, 256, 278, 357, 374, *Note* [CC]. iv. 73, 106, 199, 203.
Polygamy, its Diſadvantages, i. 225.
Polytheiſm, the primitive Religion, iv. 239, its Origin, 245.
Pompey, his Superſtition, ii. 304.
Pope, Mr. his Character, i. 241, quoted, 14, 216, 236. ii. 354.
POWER, what its Idea, iii. 93, 287, *Note* [E].

Practice, how useful to Taste, i. 299.
Prejudice, how hurtful to Taste, i. 302.
Presbyterians, their Character, i. 70, 81.
Presence, real, iv. 296.
Pressing Seamen, ii. 165, 166.
Priest, his Character, i. 249.
Priests, their Origin, i. 81.
Prior, Mr. quoted, i. 166.
Pride, whence it arises, iii. 245.
Probability, what, ii. 84, 156.
Promise, what, and whence its Obligation, ii. 272.
——— not the Origin of Government, ibid.
Proof, what, ii. 84, 155.
Property, its Equality impracticable, iii. 47, defended, 51.
——— why the Source of Pride, iii. 255.
Protestant Succession, its Advantages and Disadvantages, i. 316.
Providence, particular, on what founded, iii. 199.
Provinces, under what Government most oppressed, i. 20.
Pyrrhus, his Saying of the Romans, ii. 33.

Q

QUAKERS, their Character, i. 81, 83.
Quinctilian quoted, i. 113, 118, 245. iv. 87, 141, 308.

R

RACINE, his Character, i. 242, quoted, 316. ii. 295.
Ramsay, Chevalier, quoted, ii. 351.
Reason, when it influences Action, only a cooler Passion, ii. 272, 273.
——— how far the Source of Morals, iv. 4.
Reason and Taste, their Boundaries, i. 288.
Reason more precarious than Taste, i. 308.
Reasons of State, iii. 62.
Refinement, in what respect useful, ii. 58.
Regnard, his Voyage to Lapland, quoted, iv. 257.
Relations of Ideas, one Object of Reason, iii. 42.
Religion, two principal Questions with regard to it, iv. 237.
——— its first Principles, not primary but secondary, iv. 240.
Resemblance, a Source of Association, iii. 29, 76.
Retz, Cardinal de, quoted, ii. 346. iii. 172.
Revolution, in 1688, no Contract or Promise, ii. 277.
Rhamadan of the Turks, iv. 320.

Rhodes, Number of its Inhabitants, ii. 236.
Riches, why the Object of Pride or Eſteem, iii. 252. iv. 114.
Rochefoucault quoted, iii. 278. iv. 345, *Note* [Z].
Rome, i. 58, 99, 104, 244.
——— ancient, its Size and Number of Inhabitants, ii. 241, 242.
——— Name of its tutelar Deity concealed, iv. 348, *Note* [FF].
Romans, when moſt corrupt, i. 27, anciently Pirates, ii. 357, their Government under the Empire not burthenſome, ii. 44.
Roman Empire, whether advantageous, ii. 73.
Roundhead Party, i. 72.
Rouſſeau quoted, i. 149.
Rowe, Mr. his Tragedy cenſured, i. 281.

S

SADDER contains little Morality, iv. 318.
Sallee, Prince of, his Saying of De Ruyter, iv. 298.
Sallust quoted, i. 104, 150. ii. 34, 206, 243. iv. 113, 198, 311, 323.
Saint Evremond's Character of Turenne, iv. 101.
——— quoted, iv. 121.
Sannazarius, Cenſure of his Paſtorals, iv. 82.
Scapulaire, what, iv. 288.
Scepticism, iii. 42, 64, exceſſive, 209, *&c.* moderate, 210, with regard to the Senſes, 211, with regard to Reaſon, 218, Religious, iv. 389.
Sceptic, the, i. 194.
Sciences, their Diviſion, iii. 227.
Scholaſtic Religion, its uſual Abſurdity, iv. 292.
Scriptures, holy, quoted, iv. 34, 201.
Scriptural and traditional Religions compared, iv. 306.
Selfiſh and ſocial not oppoſite, iv. 163.
Self-Love not the Foundation of moral Sentiment, iv. 150.
Seneca quoted, ii. 177, 182, 187, 192. iv. 22, 204, 259, 347, *Note* [CC].
Seneca the Elder quoted, ii. 190.
Sentiment, how far the Source of Morals, iv. 4, 170.
Sextus Empiricus quoted, i. 193. iv. 28, 263, 312, 335, *Note* [E].
Shafteſbury, Lord, quoted, i. 99, 154. ii. 160.
Shakeſpeare, his Artifice in Othello, i. 277, quoted, iv. 121.
Simplicity in Writing, i. 239.
Slavery prejudicial to Populouſneſs, ii. 178.
——— to Humanity, i. 176.
Sneezing, God of, iv. 347, *Note* [DD].

Socrates,

Socrates, his Character, iv. 128.
Soil, very fertile, no Advantage, ii. 22.
Soldier, his Character, i. 249.
Soldiers, what Proportion they commonly bear to the People, ii. 9.
Sophocles, his Character, ii. 242.
Spain, ancient and modern, its Inhabitants, ii. 260.
Spaniard, his Politeneſs, ii. 136.
Sparta, its Policy, ii. 8. Number of its Inhabitants, 238.
Spartian quoted, ii. 370. iv. 303.
Spencer quoted, iv. 127.
Sportula, their bad tendency, ii. 262.
Stanyan quoted, ii. 100.
States, ſmall, their Advantage, ii. 195.
Stoic, the, i. 175.
Stoics, their Idea of Providence, iii. 143.
——— their Superſtition, iv. 309.
STRABO quoted, i. 328. ii. 134, 181, 182, 187, 223, 229, 249, 254, 259, 261, 264, 367, 371, 373. iv. 255, 289.
Stuart Family, whether their Succeſſion ought to have been retained, ii. 316, whether reſtored, 329.
Subjects, particular, ſuit not with Refinement, ii. 4.
SUETONIUS quoted, i. 22, 321, *Note* [C]. ii. 176, 181, 242, 244, 245, 262. iii. 171. iv. 214, 260, 289, 304, 349, *Note* [HH]
Suidas quoted, i. 125. ii. 374, *Note* [BB].
Superſtition defined, i. 79, 80, *&c.*
Swift, Dr. quoted, ii. 82, 103. ii. 365, *Note* [O]. iv. 100.
Sycophant, its original Senſe, ii. 80.
SYMPATHY, the great Source of moral Sentiment, iv. 81, 121.
Syracuſe, its Extent and Number of Inhabitants, ii. 237.

T

TACITUS, ſomewhat ſuperſtitious, though profane, iv. 308, quoted, i. 11, 22, 70, 134, 153. ii. 153, 181, 186, 192, 202, 242, 257, 264, 282, 358, *Note* [B], 363, *Note* [L]. iii. 171. iv. 126, 271, 308, 341, *Note* [S], 349, *Note* [HH].
TASSO quoted, i. 100, 170.
Taſte, its Standard, i. 284.
Taxes, when hurtful, ii. 125, 126.
——— do not fall ultimately on Land, ii. 130.
Temple, Sir Will. i. 101, 264. ii. 127.
Tendency of Actions, not their accidental Conſequences, regarded in Morals, iv. 338, *Note* [L].
TERENCE, his Character, i. 245, quoted, 154, 312.

Tertullian quoted, ii. 373.
Thebes, Number of its Inhabitants, ii. 236.
Theiſm, its Origin from Polytheiſm, iv. 271.
Theiſm and Polytheiſm compared, iv. 284.
Theocritus, ii. 224.
Thinkers, abſtruſe, how uſeful, ii. 3, ſhallow, ibid.
THUCYDIDES, the firſt Hiſtorian, ii. 223.
——— quoted, i. 220. ii. 9, 99, 115, 197, 206, 217, 223, 230, 231, 239. iv. 127, 291.
Timon of Athens, his Affection to Alcibiades, iv. 88.
Timotheus the Poet, his Hymn to Diana, iv. 315.
Tillotſon, his Argument againſt the real Preſence, iii. 153.
Toleration naturally attends Polytheiſm, iv. 284.
Tory Party i. 73, their ſpeculative Syſtem, ii. 268.
Tot, Monſ. du, quoted, i. 358, *Note* [C]
Tournefort, Monſ. quoted, i. 231. ii. 253.
Tragedy, why it pleaſes, i. 270.
Tranquillity of Mind, whence its Merit, iv. 127.
Treaſures, their Effects, ii. 92.
Turkiſh Government, ii. 131.
Tyrannicide, why blameable, iv. 29.
Tyrants, ancient, their Cruelty, ii. 207.

U

UNITY of Action, what, iii. 33.
Uſtariz, Geronimo de, quoted, ii. 173.
Uſurpation, what, ii. 279.
UTILITY, a Source of Approbation, iv. 26, why, 69.
——— to others, iv. 12, to ourſelves, 119.

V

VALERIUS Maximus quoted, ii. 368, *Note* [U].
Vanity, allies eaſily to Virtue, i. 94, why blamed, iv. 142.
VARRO quoted, ii. 181, 188, 189, 253, 262, iv. 302.
Vauban quoted, ii. 90.
Vega, Garcillaſſo de la, quoted, ii. 76.
Verna, its Senſe and Inferences from it, ii. 361.
Verney, Paris de, quoted, ii. 358, *Note* [C].
Veſpaſian, his Miracle, iii. 171.
Victor, Aurelius, quoted, ii. 370.
Victor, Publius, quoted, ii. 238, 370.
VIRGIL, his Character, i. 242, quoted, ii. 261. iv. 22, 112.
Virtue and Vice defined, iv. 8.

Vis inertiæ, iv. 286, *Note* [D].
Vitellius, his Meanneſs, iv. 123.
Vitruvius quoted, ii. 367, *Note* [T].
Voluntary and involuntary, why made by the Moderns ſo eſſential to Morals, iv. 205.
Voltaire quoted, i. 11. iii. 351.
Vopiſcus quoted, ii. 338, 246, 372, *Note* [Z].
Voſſius quoted, ii. 170, 369.

W

WALLER, his Character, i. 162.
Wiſdom, its Merit, whence, iv. 105.
Wit or Ingenuity, its Merit, whence, iv. 136.
Whig Party, i. 73, their Speculative Syſtem, ii. 268.
Wolſey, Cardinal, i. 152.
Women, timorous and ſuperſtitious, iv. 255.
Wonder, the Paſſion of, inclines us to believe Miracles, iii. 164.

X

XENOPHON, his Superſtition, iv. 349, *Note* [II].
——— quoted, i. 97, 107. ii. 112, 113, 186, 196, 208, 220, 232, 233, 237, 238, 256. iv. 112, 215, 259, 286, 314, 349.
Xerxes, his Purſuit of New Pleaſures, i. 164.

FINIS.